

*Sell's Bible Study  
Text Books*

*Studies  
in the  
Four Gospels*

*A. T. Sell*



BS 2555 .S44 1917

Sell, Henry T. 1854-1928.

Studies in the four Gospels





STUDIES IN THE  
FOUR GOSPELS

BIBLE STUDY BY TEXT-BOOKS

A New Method for Bible Classes

By HENRY T. SELL

*Ten Interesting Studies*

1. Supplemental Bible Studies.
2. Bible Studies by Books.
3. Bible Studies by Periods.
4. Bible Studies by Doctrines.
5. Bible Studies in the Life of Christ.
6. Bible Studies in the Life of Paul.
7. Studies in the Life of the Christian.
8. Studies in Early Church History.
9. Bible Studies in Vital Questions.
10. Studies in the Four Gospels.

# STUDIES IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

The Master Books of the World

By

HENRY T. SELL, D.D.

*Author of "The Sell Series of Bible Studies  
for Adult Classes"*



NEW YORK      CHICAGO      TORONTO  
Fleming H. Revell Company  
LONDON      AND      EDINBURGH

Copyright, 1917, by  
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue  
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.  
London: 21 Paternoster Square  
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street



## Foreword

IN "Studies in the Four Gospels" an effort is made to set forth the circumstances under which the Gospels came to be written, their respective view-points, characteristics, agreements, differences, arguments and analyses, together with an appraisal of their messages to the ancient and to the modern world.

In the reawakening interest in Bible study, the need of a thorough understanding of the Gospels is easily first. All history turns, as on a pivot, upon their record. Our modern religion and civilization are founded upon them. Time is reckoned as B. C. and A. D., as with the advent of Jesus Christ a new and a brighter era dawned for man. They are the keystone of the Biblical arch. They are the vouchers of our Christian faith. They reveal the sources of life and set forth the principles of conduct which make life worth while. They easily outrank all ancient and modern books. Their message never grows old ; it is a means of inestimable comfort and power to those who accept it. Their supreme aim is the production of belief in a risen Lord and Saviour and, through Him, the moral, the social and the political regeneration of mankind.

Each Gospel has a distinct and definite purpose in view. It sets forth in its own way, from a common

source of facts, the world's greatest story. This work is not done dully but with a heartiness and enthusiasm that know no bounds. Each evangelist thoroughly believed in the cause he advocated.

To apprehend the meaning of the Gospel writers and "Why Four Gospels?" their books should be studied separately and consecutively—as is attempted in this volume—and then, while the view-point of each is fresh in mind, they should be diligently compared with each other. The details should also be studied in the light of the whole and not the whole in the light of the details. In this way, and in no other, can the great all around message of the Christ be made known to us. We need to see it all in order to get the larger perspective. It is through such a study of the Gospels that there may emerge for us the true historic figure of the Christ.

The greatest question of the early Church was—"Who is Jesus Christ?" This to-day is not only the greatest question of the modern Church but of the modern world. This master question can only be sufficiently and satisfactorily answered for us, as it was of old, in the Gospels—"The Master Books of the World."

In the making of this volume the author wrote to eight eminent New Testament scholars in the United States and asked for lists of the latest and best books upon the Gospels. Very satisfactory replies were received but the lists received are too long to be quoted here. Many of the books have been diligently studied

by the author and the results of that study are incorporated in this volume. The chief authority, however, is the Gospels themselves.

This book is for use in adult Bible, pastors', Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. classes, young peoples' societies, schools, colleges and private study.

While each one of the nine studies, presented in this book, may be considered in a single session of the class, much better results may be attained by devoting two or more sessions to each study and assigning topics to individuals in advance.

This is the tenth volume to be issued in the author's "Series of Bible Studies," of which about two hundred thousand copies have been sold.



# Contents

I.	THE MAKING OF THE FOUR GOSPELS	.	11
	(Introductory Study)		

## *The Gospel of Matthew*

II.	THE PLAN OF MATTHEW	.	.	.	29
III.	THE WORLD'S MESSIAH	.	.	.	44

## *The Gospel of Mark*

IV.	THE OBJECT OF MARK	.	.	.	62
V.	THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHRIST	.	.	.	76

## *The Gospel of Luke*

VI.	THE PURPOSE OF LUKE	.	.	.	89
VII.	THE CERTAINTY OF THE SAVIOUR	.	.	.	106

## *The Gospel of John*

VIII.	THE CLEAR VISION OF JOHN	.	.	.	124
IX.	THE REVELATION OF THE CHRIST	.	.	.	144



## STUDY I

### THE MAKING OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

**Origin.**—We do not have the Christ because of the Gospels but the Gospels because of the Christ. These writings are an effort to answer the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" and to express and chronicle His life, teaching, death and resurrection. They are connected in a very vital way. "It is indispensable to detect the running stream of life that winds steadily, for all its eddies and backwaters, between and through these varied writings; and this is impossible till the critic stands beside the life which they presuppose and out of which they rise."

**Definition.**—Gospel means "Good Tidings" (Luke 2: 10-14). In the mouth of Christ and those whom He sent forth it was the good tidings of the kingdom of God (Luke 4: 16-21; Matthew 4: 23; 9: 35; 10: 7; 11: 1-6; Mark 1: 14; 16: 15; Luke 9: 2; 10: 1-9; John 1: 1-18). This "Good Tidings" was inseparably associated with Christ. It is His Gospel.

**Literary Form.**—The Gospels must be classified by themselves as having a specific literary form. "They are authoritative statements of the acts and words of Christ. As in the machinery of public life we have protocols reciting with authority facts or documents

upon which political action is to be founded, so the authors of the Gospels drew up, and the early Church accepted, what were, not in themselves books of law, but the best authority for the acts and words of their Founder to which the Church looked for its supreme law. And this technical description is borne out by the language of the preface to Luke's Gospel (1 : 1-4). No doubt the Gospel of John differs widely in spirit from the other three. Its prologue elaborates a theological position, which the body of the work supports, but this necessitates only a slight modification of the formula, used above ; the ' Acts ' of Jesus become in John's writings, ' Signs ' ; His ' Words ' are brought forward as ' Witness ' of His Divine essence and mission. Thus the fourth Gospel may be placed in the same category with the other three."

**The Background.**—The time, of the life and work of Christ which the Gospels record, was within about the first thirty-three years of the first century. The place was Palestine, under Roman rule. Galilee and Judea were thickly settled portions of Palestine. Here was the midway between the east and west of the vast Roman Empire. Caravans were constantly traversing this district—what was said and done here would speedily be heralded throughout the known world. It was a fitting place to proclaim the " Good Tidings " which was to influence the world. The population of the Empire was about 120,000,000, of which only about 20,000,000 were citizens—the rest were slaves and tributaries, for the most part. Some authorities



claim that there were only about 4,000,000 Roman citizens in full. There was a vast variety of political conditions.

*Outwardly It Was a Splendid Age.*—The world state seemed to be realized. The arts and sciences were highly cultivated. Commercial traffic and pleasure travel were made easy by splendidly kept military roads which extended to the farthest confines of the Empire. There was a general use of the Greek language.

*Internal Conditions Were Bad.*—The old philosophies and religions were worn out. The temples fostered all sorts of evils. Seneca, the great Roman philosopher, wrote: "All things are full of crimes and vices." He agreed with what Paul wrote, along the same line, to the Romans (1:18-32). Human life was considered of little value; it was daily sacrificed, for the pleasure of the populace, in the shows of the circus.

*There Was a Reawakening of the Religious Sense.*—To this the Gospel appealed. It presented an adequate object of worship. It insisted on purity in moral conduct. It emphasized the value of human life. It preached a faith and hope which rejuvenated the hearts of men. It so worked for good that the adherents of Christ were found in great numbers, throughout the Empire, within thirty years after His Gospel was made known.

*The Oral Period.*—The Gospel was first proclaimed through the spoken word. Christ used this method

(Matt. 5 : 1, 2). He instructed His disciples to use this method (Luke 9 : 1, 2 ; 10 : 1 ; Acts 1 : 8). In the days when there were no newspapers, coming in streams from fast running presses, and no deluge of printed books, when everything had to be written out carefully by hand, it was the most effective way to get the " Good Tidings " before the people. Men's memories were more highly cultivated, then, on account of the lack of the constant presence of the printed page.

*It was customary to preserve narratives and teachings* for a considerable period in oral form before putting them into writing. " The Jewish Targums "—paraphrases of the Old Testament books in the vernacular—" existed orally for a century or more before assuming definite written form."

*The oral way of instruction* had been the way of great philosophers and religious teachers for centuries. Socrates, the father of Greek philosophy, left no writing of any sort. Epictetus, the Stoic, likewise wrote nothing. Yet through their spoken words, they created a new world of philosophy. Their disciples, afterwards, wrote down what they remembered of their words.

*Remarkable results followed the proclamation of the oral Gospel* by Jesus Christ. Crowds followed Him everywhere and hung upon His words. After His resurrection, His disciples, taking up the work of oral preaching, stirred great cities—like Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth and Rome—of hundreds of thousands of inhabitants; to their very depths, and made a multitude of converts. What more effective method could have

been used? To-day, when great crises arise, men gather to hear the spoken word, as even more effective than the printed page.

*The Oral Period Has Not Yet Come to an End.*—Men still desire to hear the spoken Gospel.

**The Writing Age.**—There came a time, however, in the history of the early Church, when Christian communities had multiplied rapidly and were widely scattered over the Roman Empire. Those who had heard and seen the Christ, or had been with those who had seen Him, were passing away. It was felt that what Christ taught and did should be preserved, in its purity. The Christians wanted, in written form, His Gospel. They had heard it repeated again and again, they could repeat it themselves. But what of those who would come after them? So while things were fresh in the memory, the first attempts at Gospel making were made. Luke's preface to his Gospel (1: 1-4) is the classic example of the record of these efforts. It was easy to remember and to repeat what Christ had said and done. It was not difficult to write it out. He spoke in parables; in striking, pithy sentences. He was unique and original in His way of putting truth. Then the truth which He taught was new and startling. His works of power could not help but impress people.

*At just what time "The Writing Age" began* it is impossible to say. The bounds of "The Oral Period" have been roughly placed between 30 and 50 A. D.; "The Writing Age," 50 to 100; "Collect-

ing the Writings " of the New Testament, 100 to 150. But within " The Oral Period " New Testament scholars now tell us that there must have been many letters describing the Christ and what He said and did. Some of these letters may have been quite lengthy and gone quite into detail. We see this tendency in the Epistles of Paul, which he began to write in about 52 A. D.

*Some scholars place the beginning of Gospel making* as early as 40 A. D. Professor James Moffatt, of Oxford, in his " Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament " (page 215), says : " Nevertheless by at least 50 A. D. such notes and collections (in regard to the words and works of Christ) may have begun to exist in rough form. The current was, at any rate, setting unmistakably in that direction. By the time of Paul's later literary activity, written evangelic narratives were in existence here and there, especially within the primitive Palestinian churches. The primary need for these is to be found in the fact that a new generation was rising, who were dependent for their history of Jesus upon a fast diminishing company of eye-witnesses, in the rapid extension and consolidation of the Christian communities."

The Four Forms of the Gospel, which have come down to us, bear the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Two apostles and two companions of apostles. There were other attempts at Gospel making, which have perished. These Gospels, each in its own sphere, were considered—by those in the early Church, who had immediate, or the best, knowl-

edge of the things of which they relate—most truly to set forth the words and works of the Christ.

*The first three Gospels* are called "The Synoptic Gospels" (seeing together) because they largely relate to the same events in the ministry of Christ in Galilee. "They are built upon the same general historical framework. Thus they all contain, after an account of the preaching of John the Baptist, and of the baptism and temptation of Jesus, a narrative of Jesus' Galilean ministry, of a journey to Jerusalem, of the last week in Jerusalem, and of the post-resurrection story; all omitting the early Judean ministry of which the fourth Gospel has an account." They resemble each other in the recording and in the general order of the events which they relate. The resemblance between Mark and Luke is especially close. By far the larger part of the verbal agreement, in the three Gospels, is found in the giving of the words of others, especially the words of Jesus. Yet there are marked differences. Each has a specific motive and arranges the common matter, in specific instances, somewhat differently. There are additions and omissions. Matthew contains 330 verses not found elsewhere; Mark 68 and Luke 541. Take this added matter in Luke 9:51-18:34; there is here a series of events and discourses, which constitute about one-third of this Gospel and which have no parallel elsewhere. In narrative Matthew occupies about one-fourth of his Gospel, Luke one-third and Mark one-half. These resemblances and differences constitute what is known as "The Synop-

tic Problem." But, "Behind our present four Gospels there doubtless lay, as Luke's preface indicates, an oral tradition, ultimately derived from eye-witnesses." The written Gospels resemble each other so much, probably, because the oral teaching of the apostles had taken a settled form. The apostles would be anxious to use, and their hearers to require the use of, the words of Christ in the way in which He spoke them. There was a careful selection of material, for each Gospel, for the purpose which the author had before him. We are frankly told in the Gospel of John of this selection of material for a particular purpose (John 20: 30, 31)—"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name."

*The fourth Gospel*, written long after the first three, does not contradict or supplant but supplements Matthew, Mark and Luke. It was conceived in a different atmosphere, when the Church had shaken itself free from questions of the Jewish law and more spiritual matters had come to the front. It is the intensity of the present communion with the living Lord, in the Spirit, which dominates the fourth Gospel. Recent criticism of the first three Gospels has brought them nearer to John in that the things set forth in them—especially in Mark—in regard to Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, are elaborated and brought to full flower



in this fourth Gospel. The Synoptic Gospels concern themselves, chiefly, about the reporting of the events of Christ's ministry in Galilee while the fourth Gospel has to do, for the most part, with the ministry in Judea. But the fact is that none of the Gospels professes to give a complete account of Christ's life on earth. In John's Gospel there are repeated references to the ministry in Galilee (4:43; 6:1; 7:1), while expressions occur in the other Gospels which would be unintelligible if the ministry had been strictly confined to Galilee (Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34).

*Problems and Key-notes.*—Each Gospel had a separate problem before it. The key-note of Matthew is—"Fulfillment of Prophecy" (1:22; 2:5, 6, 15, 17, 23, etc.); Mark—"The Authority of the Christ" (1:22, 27, etc.); Luke—"The Certainty of the Historical Christ" (1:4); John—"The Lordship (1:1) and Saviourhood of the Christ" (20:30, 31).

*Four Great Points of Agreement.*—There is a central mass of historical truth around which Matthew, Mark, Luke and John group their materials. This is the fundamental element which makes them preach the "Good Tidings."

1. The incarnation of the Son of God. Each evangelist sets this forth in his own way (Matt. 1:23; 3:17; Mark 1:1, 11; Luke 1:4; 2:11; John 1:1-18).

2. The life of Christ on earth in human form and subject to human conditions. The central portion of each Gospel is taken up with this life.

3. Large space is given to the events of His last week: the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the Temple discourses, the last supper and the trials in which Jesus sets forth His claims as the Messiah and Saviour (Matt. 26: 26-29; 26: 62-64; Mark 14: 22-24; 14: 61, 62; Luke 22: 14-20; 22: 66-71; John 13: 1-17: 26; 18: 29-19: 19), His rejection by the Jews, His trials and His death by crucifixion (Matt. 27: 1-66; Mark 15: 1-47; Luke 23: 1-56; John 19: 1-42).

4. His resurrection. The rising from the dead on the third day, the parting instructions to the disciples and the ascension are all amply set forth (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20 and 21).

**Authorship and Authenticity.**—As far back as we can go, in the early records of the Church, the Gospels bore the names we now know them by—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These “Writings” were well known in the second century.

*Some of the early testimonies* are as follows:

*Tatian* made a Harmony of the Gospels, which was published about 170 A. D. The “Diatessaron,” as it was called, became very popular. It was a compilation of our four named Gospels. It began with the opening verses of John’s Gospel—thus putting at the forefront the claim of the Divinity of Christ.

*Irenæus* (115-202 A. D.) was born in Asia Minor and spent his early life there. He afterwards became bishop of Lyons in France. He was well acquainted with the four named Gospels, in the form in which we now have them. In his writings he uses the New



Testament with great freedom. He makes several hundred references to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Of John, he writes specially, "having previously spoken of the three other Gospels and their authors," "Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia" ("Adv. Haer.," III, 1). He thus commenced his teaching in the Gospel—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," etc. (John 1:1). Irenæus, while he lived in Asia Minor, was a pupil of Polycarp (bishop of the church at Smyrna) who was a disciple of John, the Apostle, who was bishop at the near-by city of Ephesus. Paul had made a long stay at Ephesus and founded the church there. Irenæus had an opportunity to get knowledge at first hand from Polycarp, who had known and talked with many eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of what Jesus had said and done. Irenæus gives this testimony in a letter—"For I remember the occurrences of those days better than the more recent ; so I can tell the very spot in which the blessed Polycarp sat and conversed, and his outgoings and his incomings, and the character of his life, and the form of his body, and the conversations which he held with the multitude ; and how he related his familiar intercourse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he rehearsed their sayings, and what things they were which he had heard from them with regard to the Lord and His miracles and teaching. All these

things Polycarp related in harmony with the writings, as having received them from the eye-witnesses of the Word of life" ("Early Christian Literature Primers," II, 55).

*Polycarp*: his life (69-155) "spans with one grand arch the entire chasm of historic uncertainty which appears in our accounts of the early Church." One abutment rests upon the eye- and ear-witnesses of our Lord and the other upon Irenæus and men of his age. The apostolic traditions are borne, in security, over this bridge. One epistle, out of a number which Polycarp wrote, remains to us ("Early Christian Literature Primers," I, 80-87). This letter begins—"Polycarp and the presbyters that are with him to the church of God, which is at Philippi: mercy unto you, and peace from God Almighty, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, be multiplied." It shows that the Gospel writings had become so popular that they had entered into the common life and language of the people. Four things are here brought to our notice: 1. "He states the fact of our Lord's resurrection and ascension to glory." 2. "He refers to the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles." 3. "He refers to the 'Oracles of Our Lord' which were the words for the written Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John." 4. "He quotes the language of Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Peter and Paul." "Here, then, we get a link in our chain which connects us with the actual writers of the New Testament and assures us that its contents were in the hands of men who lived before the last of the

apostles were dead." Polycarp was martyred (burned to death) for his faith in his Lord.

*We Are Carried Over Into the First Century by the Testimony of Papias.*—Papias (70–150) was bishop of Hierapolis and a contemporary of Polycarp. He was hearer of many intimate acquaintances of the apostles. He knew two men, who were disciples of the Lord. He knew the daughters of the apostle Philip. He was a careful observer and writer. He wrote a work in five books—"Interpretation of the Sayings of the Lord," which is now lost. The last trace of it was in 1218 A. D. It may come to light again. A number of quotations from this work are preserved to us by Irenæus and Eusebius. He was an eager inquirer after the truth as shown by the following brief selections: "But, if indeed, anywhere, one who had followed the elders came, I inquired searchingly about the words of the elders—what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip, or what Thomas, or James, or what John or Matthew; or what other of the Lord's disciples (had spoken) that which also Aristion and the presbyter John, disciples of the Lord, spoke." Of the authorship of Mark's Gospel, he says: "Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately whatever he remembered, though indeed not (setting down) in order what was said or done by Christ; for he did not hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him: but afterwards, as I said (he followed) Peter, who adapted his discourses to the necessities of the occasion, but not so as to furnish a systematic account of the 'Oracles of the Lord';

so that Mark committed no fault when he wrote some things as he recollected them. For of one thing he took care—to pass by nothing which he heard and not to falsify in anything.” Papias further says—“Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew tongue and every one interpreted them as he was able.” By “Oracles” is here meant the teachings of Christ.

*There Was a Vast Audience, Eager for the Gospels.*  
—There is much other testimony along the above lines which cannot be given here for lack of space. At the time when Polycarp and Papias lived there were great numbers of Christians in Asia Minor. This fact is shown independently by the celebrated letter of Pliny, the Roman governor of the province of Bithynia in Asia Minor, written about 112 A. D. to the emperor Trajan, in which he speaks of the wide prevalence of Christianity. As early as 64 A. D., within thirty-one years after the resurrection of Christ, Tacitus, the great Roman historian, informs us that the number of Christians in Rome was “*ingens multitudo*”—a great multitude. He tells us this in connection with the fierce persecution that broke out at that time. Before this time Paul had gone on his three great missionary journeys, carrying the Gospel into the big metropolitan centers of population and winning converts by the thousands.

*The modern view of the Gospels* is that while the authors did not themselves put their names to them yet that tradition is right in assigning their sources to them. Mark's Gospel was written in Greek; he was

the interpreter of Peter—Peter narrating and Mark writing—hence we have here the Gospel of Peter, an eye-witness and an apostle. Papias tells us that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew—"The Teachings of Christ." Matthew was also an eye-witness and an apostle. But this Gospel was quite early rewritten, or translated, into the Greek. In the narrative part it has much in common with Mark, as also has Luke. But only one-quarter of the Gospel of Matthew, in Greek, is taken up with narrative, thus keeping its original character of "The Teachings of Christ" for a special purpose. If Matthew's Gospel, with Luke, follows, in the main, the narrative in Mark, then we still have the narrative direct from the testimony of an eye-witness. Luke, a companion of Paul, declares plainly how and why he composed his Gospel (1:1-4) in a historian's way, getting at the evidence from "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." In John, the author of the fourth Gospel, we have also an eye-witness and an apostle. It has been claimed that this Gospel is a series of discourses which were delivered by John to his church in Ephesus. As there were two Johns—the "Apostle" and the "Elder," there has been a tendency, for certain reasons on the part of some scholars, to assign this Gospel to the "Elder." But in either case it is claimed that we have the correct reporting of the discourses and events. There is still ample evidence that the sources are from the "Apostle" and an eye-witness. The early Church believed and taught that this Gospel was that of John,

the "Apostle." For more about this matter see the eighth study in this book, sub-head authorship.

**Dates.**—There has here been quite a wide divergence of opinion, as the Gospels are themselves undated. There are certain bounds within which they must have been written. There is still much to be adjusted. The modern tendency is to move back towards the earlier dates. It is perfectly possible to hold, with good evidence, that the first three Gospels, in Greek, were written between 60 and 70 A. D. The Hebrew Matthew might have been written five or ten years earlier. John's Gospel saw the light, in all probability, in the ninetieth year of the first century. The order in Greek is—Mark, Matthew, Luke and John.

Professor Harnack, in his book—"Date of the Acts and Synoptic Gospels"—tells us (page 124), "It seems now to be established beyond question that both books (The Gospel of Luke and The Acts) of this great historical work were written while Paul was still alive." He further declares (page 133), "That tradition asserts no veto against the hypothesis that St. Luke, when he met St. Mark in the company of St. Paul, the prisoner, was permitted by him to peruse a written record of the Gospel history which was essentially identical with the Gospel of St. Mark given to the Church at a later time."

**The Messages of the Gospels** will be considered under the chapters—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, in this book.



**The Significance of the Facts and the Faith** which produced the Gospels cannot be overestimated. These Writings have withstood the assaults of the ages. They are still alive with great spiritual power. The primary concern is what the writers believed about Jesus rather than with the exact forms in which they happened to express that belief. The distinctive note of the new religion, whether in hymn or Gospel, was the person of Christ. This is what distinguished the Gospels from Judaism and Hellenism and it is a difference which is immensely greater than any difference between one Gospel and another. The fundamental conviction is here expressed that with Jesus a new relationship to God has been effected and manifested. It is faith in a living Lord that is set forth. It is a growing conviction of New Testament scholars that the filial consciousness of Jesus preceded the Messianic. "It is the recognition of this filial consciousness of Jesus as the crucial element in the Christology of the first three Gospels which enables us to understand the continuity between them and the fourth Gospel." In regard to the belief of the early Church, one of the greatest of modern scholars, Professor James Moffatt—author of "The Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament"—tells us in "The Theology of the Gospels" (page 174), "My point is that an examination of the earliest records, of the sources behind Mark and the other two synoptic Gospels, shows the Messianic drapery or setting of His person was not the result of Paulinism impinging upon

the pure and original memory of a humanitarian figure, who lived and died for the sake of a message which amounted to a little more than a doctrine of theism plus brotherly love. . . . The Jesus of the Primitive Church was a Jesus whom believers hailed and worshipped as the Christ of God."

### QUESTIONS

What can be said of the origin of the Gospels, definition and literary form? What was the background, the outward and internal conditions? How was there an awakening of the religious sense? What was the oral period and how was it customary to preserve narratives and teachings? What can be said of the oral way of instruction of great philosophers and teachers? What remarkable results followed the proclamation of the oral Gospel? What was the writing age? When did it begin? How early were there attempts at Gospel making? What can be said of the four forms of the Gospel? The first three and the fourth? Problems and key-notes? The four points of agreement? What can be said of the authorship and authenticity? What are some of the early testimonies, Tatian, Irenæus, Polycarp, Papias? What can be said of the audience ready for the Gospels? What is the modern view of the Gospels? What can be said of the dates of the Gospels? What can be said of the facts and the faith which produced the Gospels?



## STUDY II

### THE PLAN OF MATTHEW

**The Aim** of Matthew is to present a biography with a purpose. It is to take the great ideal of the Master and to set it forth by facts, discourses, miracles and parables, arranged in historic order. This is also the method of the other Gospel authors. They all write about the same subject but the view-points are different. Hence the difficulty in reconciling, in their accounts, that which is not intended to be reconciled. They do not contradict—they supplement each other. Much is gained by this four-sided presentation of Christ and His mission on earth. With the setting forth, in this way, of the life, words and works of the Saviour, each Gospel has also a definite problem before it for solution.

**The Problem**, which the Gospel of Matthew was set to solve, was not an easy one. Jesus had been heralded as, and had proclaimed Himself, the long expected Jewish Messiah; yet the Israelitish nation, as a nation, had disowned Him in life, and in death, and had persecuted His followers—after His resurrection. The hope that Jesus would become a political Messiah—a Jewish Cæsar—had faded away. There were many individual Jews who believed in the “New

Way " but they seemed reluctant to give up the observance of the customs of the Jewish law. The Christian cause, however, was not failing—for increasing multitudes of Gentiles were pressing into its communion—but it was rapidly becoming Greek. There was not the slightest doubt of the wonderful success of the Gospel outside of Judaism. But what had become of all the promises to Israel, when the Messiah should come? Were the Old Testament prophets wrong? They had associated "The Messianic Deliverer with the redeemed nation, but the event of history had disappointed this hope. What did it mean?" These were questions which were troubling the Jewish Christians and perplexing also those of Gentile origin. How could they be answered?

*How Can Jesus Christ be The World Messiah?*—Here is the task of the book of Matthew. It has been called—"The first historic apology for universal Christianity."

*In the solution of this problem* the argument is:

First: that Jesus Christ has come from Abraham, through the royal line of David; that He is truly begotten of the Holy Spirit; that He is divinely acknowledged as the Messiah at His baptism and that He fulfilled all the requirements of the Old Testament prophecies in regard to the Messiahship. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet" is a frequent expression. He is the long expected Jewish Messiah.

Second: that the proofs, of the true Messiahship of

Jesus Christ, having been given to the Israelitish nation that this nation rejected them and Him and deliberately crucified Him.

Third : that the Messiah having been rejected by His nation that that nation has in turn been rejected by the Messiah. The House of Israel is left desolate.

Fourth : that the "Messianic kingdom has ceased to be in any distinctive sense Jewish, and in place of the old national dispensation there was created by Jesus Himself, the true Jewish Messiah, a kingdom of all nations ; thus universal Christianity, freed from all national restrictions or peculiarly Jewish institutions, becomes the true successor of the Old Testament religion ; the true Jew must be a follower of Jesus, and, in consequence, leave Judaism behind."

It is important to carefully observe each step in this magnificent presentation of Matthew.

"The author's aim is by no means attained when he has advanced evidence that Jesus is the Messiah: He reaches his goal only when, with this as the first step of his argument, he has shown that Jesus the Messiah founded a kingdom of universal scope, abolishing all Jewish limitations."

The World Religion thus, as it is shown in Matthew, emerges from Judaism. The command of Jesus Christ—"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost"—concludes this book. "The religion of Jesus was not merely the Judaism of the temple, plus a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, but a

world religion, freed from all bounds and restrictions, local and national. The book of Matthew carries the doctrine of the apostle Paul to the conclusion which Paul saw to be involved in it, but to which he was not wont himself to press it." Before this each nation had its own gods—they were purely national. The interests of the gods were bound up with the nations who worshipped them. When the nations died, the gods died. But here was the old religion of Jehovah rising up, in its Messiah, to judge its own nation and condemn it—while it began its victorious career as "The World Religion." As such we receive it to-day, as knowing no nationality but inviting all men to share in its blessedness.

**The Readers for Whom the Book Was Primarily Intended** seem to be Jewish-Christians. The arguments and quotations from the Old Testament, the use of Jewish descriptive titles, the reporting of the words of Jesus which emphasize His mission to the Jews and the passages which refer to the downfall of Jerusalem, all seem to indicate a Jewish-Christian audience. But the wide scope of the thought here carries it far beyond any Jewish interest.

**The Times** in which the Gospel of Matthew saw its final form were troublous in the extreme. There was great need of strengthening statements in regard to the Christian faith that men's hearts might not fail them in a trying crisis, such as came in the years from 64 to 70 A. D., or from the first Roman persecution of the Christians in the time of Nero, until the destruc-

tion of Jerusalem. Christianity had made a wonderful progress in the sixth decade of the Christian era. It was in this time that Paul completed his missionary journeys and other disciples had carried the glad news of the Gospel far and wide. But in the latter part of the seventh decade there came such reversals in the religion of Jesus Christ that made many doubt its power to survive. In the year 64 of the fourteen wards of the city of Rome ten were destroyed by fire. The Christians were accused of setting the fire and this was made an excuse for the breaking out of a great persecution. They were crucified, thrown to the wild beasts, torn asunder and burned alive—all for their faith in Christ. Although Nero, the instigator of the persecution, died in 68 the persecution did not cease. Judea was revolting and the black shadow of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was being cast over the land (Matt. 24). It was a time of earthquakes, inundations, volcanic outbursts and horrible prodigies. In the midst of woes past and woes to come the sun of life, for the Christians, seemed to be setting in seas of blood. Yet this Gospel, probably, receiving its final touches in these fearful times, betrays no lack of confidence in the survival of the religion of Christ (which its enemies hoped to destroy). It reflects the spirit of the Master, who predicted these troublous times and bade His disciples not to be afraid for He was to conquer the world.

**Authorship.**—This Gospel was universally regarded by the early Church as the work of Matthew—one of

the twelve apostles. The same tradition declared that this Gospel was written in Aramaic—the vernacular of Palestine. Yet the Gospel of Matthew, as we know it, is in the Greek language, practically embodying the Aramaic.

*Matthew* was a representative Jew and an apostle of Jesus Christ. His father's name was Alphæus (Mark 2:14). His call came (Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27) when he was attending to his business, as a customs' officer, at the toll gate near Capernaum on the Great West Road from Damascus to the Mediterranean Sea. That he was an upright and good business man is evidenced by the fact that there was not, as there was in the case of Zaccheus, any hint of restoring dishonest gains (Luke 19:8). Immediately upon being called to follow Christ "He left all, rose up and followed Him." That he left all the gain and the means of gain, which meant so much to a Jew, showed the complete change wrought in him. His unselfish and noble nature is shown by the interesting side-light we get from the Gospels. "For while Mark (3:18) and Luke (6:15), in their lists of the apostles, give us the order 'Matthew and Thomas,' he, himself, has placed Thomas first 'Thomas and Matthew' (Matt. 10:3). And not only so, but he alone of the Evangelists attaches to his name the despised designation of 'the publican.' It is as if he wished to emphasize in the strongest manner the greatness of the change that had been wrought in him, and, by reminding others of the lowliness of his origin, to lead



them to magnify along with him the Hand that had worked his deliverance." He seems to have been a man "swift to hear and slow to speak." So far as the records go, he took no prominent place amongst the apostles, but that he was a keen observer and an accurate recorder of what he observed is evidenced by his Gospel. He writes as an eye-witness. He omits the whole of the first year of the ministry of Jesus because he had had no personal knowledge of what Jesus said and did in Judea, the scene of His first year's work. For the same reason he touches lightly on the early months of the Galilean ministry, before his call.

**The Making of the Gospel.**—Although this Gospel is not specifically claimed by its maker yet in the oldest Greek manuscripts the title is—"After Matthew." The early Fathers of the Church "constantly connect this Gospel with Matthew, sometimes expressly describing him as the publican or the apostle. The earliest of these testimonies is that of Papias, quoted by Eusebius—"Matthew accordingly composed the oracles (sayings) in the Hebrew dialect, and each one interpreted them as he was able" (Eusebius, H. E., III, 39). Later writers frequently repeat this assertion that Matthew wrote in Hebrew, yet accept our Greek Gospel as Matthew's, many of them apparently having no direct acquaintance with the Hebrew book (Prof. E. D. Burton, "Int. to Gospels," p. 9). That Matthew wrote the first Gospel and wrote it in the Hebrew, or Aramaic, the vernacular of Palestine, is well attested. This Gospel was in use

some time before the others. But the version that we know is in the Greek language. It seems to be acknowledged amongst scholars that all that the Hebrew contained is embodied in the Greek—with added matter, in harmony with it. "To relieve the difficulty some have conjectured that Matthew wrote his Gospel both in Aramaic and in Greek. This was the view of Bengel and Horne ("Int. to the Holy Scriptures," 4, 420). No one would question that Matthew, the tax collector at Capernaum, would be able to write in both languages. Josephus wrote his 'History of the Jews in Aramaic and in Greek'" ("Int. to Century Bible"). But other scholars view the matter in a different light. The Greek Matthew came after the Hebrew Matthew and stands second in the making of the Greek Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. The contents of the Matthew Gospel, in Hebrew and in Greek, as authentic and historical, are unquestioned. If the Greek is by another hand, it is a sympathetic one, who did for Matthew what Mark did for Peter, in setting forth what Matthew saw and heard as an eye- and ear-witness of his Lord. It was received as Matthew's Gospel.

**The Unity of This Book.**—"It is essential, at the outset, to feel the massive unity of this book, if any justice is to be done to it either from the literary or from the religious standpoint. Jesus, the true Messiah, born and trained under the Jewish law, and yet Lord of a church, whose inward faith, organization, procedure, and world-wide scope transcended the legal



limitations of Judaism—this is the dominant conception of Matthew's Gospel from beginning to end." "He wishes to show that in spite of the contemporary rupture between Judaism and Christianity there has been a divine continuity realized in the origin and issues of faith in Jesus as the Christ. (a) 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His People from their sins' (Matt. 1:21). That People is no longer Israel but a wider community (Matt. 21:43). (b) A greater than the temple is here, One who is also (c) the promulgator of a new law which transcends the old (Matt. 5:17 f.; 28:20). The three sacred possessions of Judaism have thus passed into higher uses, as the result of the life of Jesus, the Christian Messiah. It is Matthew's aim to justify this transition by showing from the life of Jesus how it was not the claim of a heretical sect who misread the Bible by the light of their own presumptuousness, but the realization of a Divine purpose and the verification of Divine prophecies in the sphere of history" (Prof. James Moffatt, "Int. to the Lit. of the New Testament," p. 244).

Here is no patchwork put together, with differing thoughts, by different hands or by a single editor who strove to put in all the evangelic matter he could find. It is a real book, with a clearly defined thought and a definite aim. The material is selected with a distinct purpose in view of which we are not left in the least doubt.

This book takes rank, above other books, for the loftiness of its conception of The World Messiah. It

is specially remarkable that Matthew could disregard his Jewish training and prejudices and grasp this view of a universal religion.

It was probably the first book to bear the name of "The Gospel" which was afterwards extended to Mark, Luke and John.

**The Theology of Matthew.**—It is at once "more precisely Messianic and more definitely Christian than the other Gospels, in the sense that Jesus, as the Son of God, is more than Messiah. As the Son of the Father and as the Lord of men, He occupies a place which does not depend upon any arguments from prophecy," although these arguments are made use of.

**Characteristics and Use.**—In shaping up this Gospel there seems to have been two things held clearly in mind—First: the problem to be solved in regard to the person and work of Jesus as The World Messiah, and—Second: the arrangement of the material of the words and works of Jesus for the efficient use of teachers and evangelists. Both of these objects were accomplished in a masterly way.

The number of teachers, prophets and evangelists multiplied very rapidly. This rapid multiplication both helped and hindered the work of the Church. It helped when those who taught others were, themselves, rightly instructed. It hindered when those who taught got twisted ideas of the truth; Paul continually complains of false teachers who played havoc with the churches he had founded.

*The use of Matthew's Gospel*, for the requirements

of these agents, is plainly to be seen. "The grouping of the discourses and events might have begun in the oral Gospels; but in Matthew, chapters 5-7 (The Sermon on the Mount), in the collection of parables, chapter 13, and in the eschatological discourses, chapters 24-25, as well as the narratives of the Passion and Resurrection, 26-28, there seems to be revealed a method and a purpose. The evangelical story, while carrying out its purpose to set forth The World Messiah, was put in a form which would suit the memory of teachers and hearers."

**The Certainty of Success.**—Although this Gospel was written at a time when Matthew, humanly speaking, could not have been sure of its success, yet there is not a single pessimistic note in it. He speaks with the utmost confidence of the triumph of the Christ, who is represented even in the dark days that preceded His death as encouraging His followers to believe in the ultimate triumph of His Kingdom—"In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer I have overcome the world."

**Relation to the Old Testament.**—Matthew was placed next to the Old Testament scriptures because it was considered that it linked the old dispensation with the new more closely than the other Gospels. It is especially rich in Old Testament references and quotations, having no parallel elsewhere. The prophecies are regarded as divinely given. The genealogical table in the first chapter of Matthew is designed to show that Jesus was descended from David and

Abraham, as in accordance with prophecy the Messiah must be. This table is a matter of interest to the writer, if not also of argument, "That the generations from Abraham to Moses are (by virtue of slight omissions and double counting) divisible into three groups of fourteen (twice seven) generations, a fact that suggests that the Messiah appeared at an appropriate time, at the end of three periods, the culmination of each of the two preceding of which had been marked by a great event in Jewish history. Throughout the Gospel, but especially in the early and later parts, he calls attention to passages of the Old Testament which he interprets as finding their fulfillment in events of Jesus' life (Matt. 1 : 22 f. ; 2 : 5, 6, 15, 17 f., 23 ; 4 : 14-16 ; 8 : 17 ; 12 : 17-21 ; 13 : 35 ; 21 : 4 f. ; 27 : 9). These eleven passages, most of them introduced by the formula, 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet' (sometimes with the insertion of the phrase 'by the Lord'), are a marked feature of this Gospel. They are a special contribution of this evangelist, having no parallel passages in Mark or Luke. Nor with the exception of Mark 1 : 2, and Luke 3 : 4 ff., parallel to Matthew 3 : 3, are there any similar passages in the other synoptic Gospels. They show, in the clearest way, the author's special interest in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament and in their fulfillment in Jesus," who came, through the Jews, to found a new spiritual kingdom of universal scope, even as their prophets had foretold.

**Relation to the Other Gospels.**—This topic, with the time of writing, has already been considered in the first study. It seems to be very plain that each evangelist had before him a certain definite task in setting forth the life and work of the Master.

*The matter peculiar to Matthew*, and alone found there, is as follows:

First, Incidents: 1. The whole of chapter second: (a) The coming of the Magi, guided by the star in the east. (b) The massacre of the innocents. (c) The flight into Egypt. (d) The return to Nazareth. 2. The coming of the Pharisees and Sadducees to John's baptism (3:7). 3. Peter's attempt to walk upon the water (14: 28-31). 4. Payment of the temple tax (17: 24-27). 5. In connection with the Passion: (a) The covenant of Judas for thirty pieces of silver; his repentance and his end (26: 14-16; 27: 3-10). (b) The dream of Pilate's wife (27: 19). (c) The appearance of saints in Jerusalem (27: 52). 6. In connection with the Resurrection: (a) The watch place at the sepulchre (27: 62-66). (b) The soldiers bribed to spread a false report (28: 11-15). (c) The earthquake (28: 2).

Second, Discourses: 1. A large part of the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5 to 7). 2. Invitation to the heavy laden (11: 28-30). 3. Idle words (12: 36, 37). 4. The blessing pronounced on Peter (16: 17-19). 5. The greater part of chapter eighteen on humility and forgiveness. 6. The rejection of the Jews (21: 43). 7. The denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees as a

connected discourse (chapter 23). 8. The description of the judgment (25 : 31-46). 9. The last commission and promise (28 : 18-20).

Third, Miracles: 1. Cure of two blind men (9 : 27-31). 2. The stater in the fish's mouth (17 : 24-27).

Fourth, Parables: 1. The tares (13 : 24-30). 2. The hid treasure (13 : 44). 3. The pearl of great price (13 : 45, 46). 4. The draw net (13 : 47-50). 5. The unmerciful servant (18 : 23-35). 6. The laborers in the vineyard (20 : 1-16). 7. The two sons (21 : 28-32). 8. Marriage of the king's son (22 : 1-14). 9. The ten virgins (25 : 1-13). 10. The talents (25 : 14-30) ("Intro. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges—Matthew").

**Relation to Our Age.**—The book of Matthew is timeless in its great message to all men of all classes and conditions in all ages. It comes with the same pertinency to our age as it came to that in which it saw the light. It will come to future ages with the same blessed truth. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all mankind—to all who trust in Him. All else may fail, but He cannot fail. He will not be judged by any civilization, but He will judge all civilizations—those which do not heed His message will be cast aside. His last command is still sounding forth—a world message from The World Saviour—"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have



commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world " (28: 18-20).

### QUESTIONS

What is the aim of Matthew's Gospel? What is its problem? How can Jesus Christ be the world Messiah? What are the four points in the argument? What can be said of the religion of Jesus Christ as a world religion? For what readers was this Gospel, primarily, intended? What of the times in which it saw its final form? What can be said of its authorship? What can be said of the making of this Gospel? What of its unity? What is its theology? What are its characteristics and use? What of the certainty of success? What is its relation to the Old Testament? What is its relation to the other Gospels? What matter is peculiar to Matthew? What is its relation to our age?

## STUDY III

### THE WORLD'S MESSIAH

The Great Question, in the early age of the Church, was—"Who is Jesus? Who do men say the Son of Man is?" The entire record of the New Testament is intended to furnish an answer to this question (John 6:42; 7:40-43). The solution is shown in Matthew 16:16 and John 20:31. The earliest declaration was that Jesus is the Christ—the Messiah (Acts 2:36; 17:3; 18:5, 28). The first converts were baptized into the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 19:5; Rom. 10:9).

*Both Jews and Gentiles would want to know*—as we do—whether Jesus corresponded to the prophetic description of the Messiah. They would also want to know how from being the Jews' Messiah He came to be the World's Messiah. Here is the task of Matthew's Gospel. To grasp the significance of the unfolding of this movement this Gospel needs to be studied section by section and chapter by chapter.

**The Coming of Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, was a Historic World Movement of Which the Outer Form was Hebrew.**—"A distinguishing feature of Matthew is his philosophic grasp of the ministry of



Jesus Christ as a great historic movement. Mark, Luke and John, with Matthew, use repeatedly the phrase 'the Kingdom of Heaven' or 'the Kingdom of God,' which must have been a regular expression of Jesus Himself. Of the use of this phrase one hundred and eleven times in the four evangelists Matthew uses it forty-seven times. But he is wholly occupied in tracing the development of this 'Kingdom of Heaven': its development as a conception, from a mere idea of a counterpart to the Roman Empire, which animated those who first hailed the Baptist's announcement, to the conception of a universal spiritual kingdom founded on service and self-denial, which Jesus with such difficulty inculcated in the minds of the inner circle of disciples; the development again of a visible 'Kingdom of Heaven' in human society, in antagonism with the ruling powers which crushed it only to give it its power of finally rising. It is natural that a historian of this type should give special prominence to the discourses of Jesus.

"Matthew gives that which the modern mind seeks, a connected view of the most sacred incidents. We get a view, through him, of the flowering of Old Testament history. The historic books of the Old Testament are the story of a theocracy in conflict with the secular: a national sense of divine kingship is gradually dissipated by assimilation to the visible government of the surrounding peoples. Thus the Old Testament history is a history of failure: the secular government culminates in national exile, and

the restored Jewish Church becomes spiritual at the price of increased exclusiveness. A truer conclusion to the history of the Old Testament is found in the Gospel of Matthew; here a ' Kingdom of God ' that is essentially spiritual is seen developing in conflict with secular powers which drive out of it all that is not spiritual, eternal and universal. There can be no more fitting close for this narrative of Matthew than his brief picture of the risen Lord, on the mountain of ascension, giving to the band of disciples the command to make disciples of all nations, animated by a presence that will be in their midst even to the end of the world " (" The Modern Reader's Bible—Matthew ").

## ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The Gospel of Matthew seems to be naturally divided into three parts.

*First.*—Early Days of the Messiah (1 : 1–4 : 16).

The second and third parts are introduced by the words—" From that time " (4 : 17 and 16 : 21).

*Second.*—Signs and works of the Messiah—" From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent : for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand " (4 : 17–16 : 20).

*Third.*—Passion of the Messiah—" From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples how He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day " (16 : 21–28 : 20).

## EARLY DAYS OF THE MESSIAH

(1 : 1-4 : 16)

Matthew sees in Jesus the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy in His preparation for the World's Messiahship. The Old Testament is continually before his eyes as he writes his story. In the first two chapters he makes six references to the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Messiah in Jesus Christ.

1. *The birth* (1 : 1-25).—Jesus is of the royal line of David. He comes in accordance with prophecy. Joseph is told to call His name Jesus—"For He shall save His people from their sins." Matthew hails Him at the outset as the true Emanuel for—"They shall call His name Emanuel, which being interpreted is, 'God with us.'"

2. *The wise men* (2 : 1-23) coming to the birth of Jesus, ask, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east and are come to worship Him." All this moves on in accordance with the prophets whom Matthew quotes. Even the going into Egypt, and the return to Nazareth, to him is part of a prearranged program.

3. *The Herald of the Messiah is John the Baptist* (3 : 1-12).—He comes, "saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Again Matthew links up his narrative by referring back to an Old Testament prophet—"For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."

4. *The threefold testimony to Jesus by John, "the Spirit of God" and "a Voice from Heaven"* (3: 11-17) at the baptism. Here Matthew strikes a new note in reporting what the "Voice from Heaven" said—"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." "Jesus as the Son of God is more than Messiah. As the Son of the Father and as the Lord of men, He occupies a place which does not depend on any arguments from prophecy" (Prof. James Moffatt, "The Theology of the Gospels," p. 13). Thus early in this Gospel is shown its teaching of the unique relation of Jesus Christ—who came through prophecy—to God the Father.

5. *The three temptations* (4: 1-11).—We have here clearly set forth the objects and aims of the Kingdom of Heaven as opposed to the Kingdom of Evil. As the true Messiah Jesus here rejects the unreal greatness which was the aim of all false Messiahs. These temptations cover the same ground as "the lust of the flesh," the "lust of the eyes" and "the pride of life."

To understand these temptations it should be kept in mind that the Jews at this time expected a miracle-working Christ who would dazzle them by His power; a Messiah who would suddenly leap to political greatness and put all kingdoms, at once, under Him and His nation. For Jesus to have yielded to these expectations would have placed Him at the head of a great national movement, while defeating, in the end, the real purpose of His coming. It must also be

remembered that as God-man that He was subject to limitations and ambitions from the human side of His being. The appeals to assume command of the kingdoms of the world and to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple were real temptations to make His name and claims at once known in a startling way, and He had the power to do it. In remaining true to His mission, Jesus gives His answer to the Tempter in the words of the Old Testament Scriptures.

6. *The departure of Jesus into Galilee* (4 : 12-16).—Again Matthew turns to an old prophet and declares that this is in accordance with what Isaiah said should come to pass (Isa. 9 : 1, 2)—“The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles : the people which sat in darkness saw great light ; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.”

In reading the account of the “Early Days of the Messiah” as given in this Gospel it is plainly shown that the writer believes that He came, in due time, in accordance with Old Testament prophecy. Here is the first element in the answer that was sought for the question—“Who is Jesus ?”

## SIGNS AND WORKS OF THE MESSIAH

(4 : 17-16 : 20)

This section opens with the words—“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (4 : 17). It con-

cludes with the great declaration of Peter, and Jesus' acceptance of that declaration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (16 : 13-20).

1. *The public ministry in Galilee.*—It seems to be a part of the plan of Matthew to omit the events of the first year of Jesus' work in the south—another evangelist has taken that up. In the account given in 4 : 17-25 we find Jesus in the full swing of a magnificent work.

Galilee, where Jesus now was, had an area of about sixteen hundred square miles of territory. Josephus tells us that there were two hundred and four towns—each town having over fifteen thousand inhabitants. The whole population numbered about three millions. A large commerce was carried on with the outer world. Through Galilee ran the great caravan routes from the near and far east to the Mediterranean Sea and Egypt. In many respects Galilee was better fitted for proclaiming the Gospel of the new Kingdom than Judea, which was a little to one side of the great routes of travel and world commerce. Capernaum, the city which Christ chose for His headquarters, was the strategic point in Galilee.

2. *The call of the four disciples* (4 : 18-22), Peter and Andrew, James and John. This is the first step taken by Jesus in the organization of His work and in training men for service.

3. *The fame of Jesus* (4 : 23-25).—He made tours in all directions about Galilee, "preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing all manner of sickness



and all manner of disease among the people." "In a short time the whole province was ringing with His name; He was the subject of conversation in every house in the whole region; men's minds were stirred with the profoundest excitement and every one desired to see Him. Crowds began to gather about Him. They grew larger and larger. They multiplied into many thousands. They followed Him wherever He went. The news spread far and wide and brought hosts from Jerusalem, Judea, Perea, even from Idumea, in the far south, and Tyre and Sidon, in the far north. He could not stay in any town because the crowds blocked up the streets and trod upon one another. He had to take them out to the fields and deserts. The whole country was on fire with excitement about Him."

What caused all this excitement? There were doubtless a number of elements in it; the marvellous healing power of Jesus would be one; another would be His gracious words of teaching; these two powers were largely exerted. Still another would be the feeling that He was the Messiah: the preaching of the Baptist had prepared the way for this.

4. *The teaching—the Sermon on the Mount* (chapters 5 to 7).—It had been seen what Jesus could do; now what had He to say? Here is a statement of the principles of the "Kingdom of Heaven" from His own lips. Here are characteristic examples of His teaching.

The Beatitudes form a text for the sermon and are

an appeal to the inner life. The sermon has been analyzed as follows: (*a*) The righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven described and its rewards announced (5 : 2-9). (*b*) The righteousness as exhibited in life (5 : 10-16). (*c*) Relations of this new righteousness to the righteousness of the Old Testament—revealed first in ethics and second in religion (5 : 17-6 : 18). (*d*) Relations of the new righteousness to secular life (6 : 19-34). (*e*) The teaching of the new righteousness; precepts and warnings to disciples as teachers (7 : 1-23). (*f*) Consequences of the acceptance or rejection of the precepts of the new righteousness (7 : 24-27).

He is no teacher guessing at the truth, "For He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes."

The difference in the principles here set forth, from the old, lies upon the surface. The opening sentence (5 : 3), "Blessed are the poor in spirit," shows how Jesus shifted the center of gravity for human life and conduct. Here is a new and startling doctrine. It is a great turning point in teaching. It is to the poor in spirit that the exaltation of the new Kingdom comes. We note its reiteration in the sevenfold expansion. "The mourners are blessed, and not the gay; the meek, and not the mighty; those who hunger after a righteousness they had not attained, and not the satisfied Pharisee; the pure and not the worldly; the peacemaker and not the conqueror; the persecutor is beneath his victim. Again, in contrast with the



received ideal of a personal righteousness that would outshine that of others, the second and third maxims, with their images of the salt and the lamp, put forward an exaltation that exalted only so long as it exerts its purifying and illuminating force on others." This teaching does not relax the law but intensifies it. The new righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

It is difficult to realize, in our age, what a startling doctrine Jesus presented. The Jews were not looking for any new doctrines of life and conduct; they were looking for a Messiah—a Jewish Cæsar—who could make every other nation bow to theirs. They failed utterly to comprehend the majesty of this new spiritual Kingdom of Christ. Its conception was so far beyond them that they did not at first see how it condemned and cast aside all the things in which they had so fondly trusted. When they did see, the bitter antagonism, which drove Jesus to His death, began to manifest itself.

5. *The authority of Jesus* is shown by many signs—miracles—of power (chapters 8 and 9). These are recorded as proofs that the Messiah, the Lord of Glory, has come and has control over disease (8: 2); over nature (8: 26); and over death (9: 25). They also show Christ's great love and compassion for man. They follow, in order, the Sermon on the Mount to reinforce its teaching. In 9: 9 is recorded the call of Matthew.

6. *Workers—the twelve apostles—are sent forth*

to proclaim the good news of the coming Kingdom (10 : 1-11 : 1). They were the heralds of the Messianic King and Kingdom. They were to preach, saying, "The kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The people were eager to hear this Gospel. They were not only to preach but also "to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils"; they were to give as freely as they had received. They were to go "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The door was not yet opened to the Gentiles.

7. *The question of the Messiahship* (11 : 2-15) was definitely brought to the front and definitely answered when John the Baptist, in prison and discouraged, sent disciples to Jesus to settle the matter, which Jesus did. All this was in accordance with what Isaiah (29 : 18 and 35 : 4-6) said should take place when the Messiah should come; the blind should see, the lame walk, the lepers be cleansed, etc. Jesus makes it plain that He is the Messiah.

8. *The beginning of the rejection of the Messiah* (11 : 16-24) which Jesus sees in the hostile attitude of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. Jesus turns to the true hearted who could receive His message (11 : 25-30).

9. *The issue is joined between the Pharisees and Jesus* (12 : 1-50) when they would not or could not understand His message in regard to the glory of the new Spiritual Kingdom of God and fixed their hopes upon a great material earthly kingdom. This growing antagonism is well shown in this chapter in the

controversies which arose out of the true use of the Sabbath Day and the means by which Christ performed His miracles ; the accusation of His being in league with Beelzebub is fully refuted. Again in regard to the claims of Christ (12 : 17-20) Matthew refers back to the prophet Isaiah. Here also we find the beginning of the turning to the Gentiles—The World Messiah—brought out (12 : 21).

10. *The new teaching by parables in regard to the new Kingdom* (13 : 1-58). These seven parables—"The Sower," "The Tares," "The Mustard Seed," "The Leaven," "The Treasure Hid in the Field," "The Pearl of Great Price" and "The Net,"—show the different aspects and purposes of the Kingdom, its growth and how it is received.

11. *A great crisis in the ministry is shown when John the Baptist is killed by Herod Antipas* (14 : 1-36). The story of the "wicked king and the faithful prophet" is well brought out in the Scripture narrative. As the excitement, due to the murder of John the Baptist, might lead to a political insurrection, and it seemed to be a part of the plan of Jesus to have no connection with it, He withdraws "into a desert place apart" (14 : 13-36). The common people, who have not yet broken with Him, seek Him out. He heals their sick and gives a great feast to five thousand. He walks on the water and His disciples worship Him as the Son of God (14 : 22-33). Thus another stage is reached in the conception of the place and power of the Christ.

12. *The contrast between Jewish legalism and the principles of the new Kingdom* is clearly brought out by Jesus (15:1-16:12). It is shown why there can be no compromise (Isa. 29:13). They stand for things between which, and those which Christ advocated, there can be reconciliation. The Pharisees, looking for outward conformity to law with no thought of the inner righteousness, love, justice and mercy which Christ so loved to set forth, could find only one way of ending the controversy and that was by compassing the death of Christ, which they began to plot.

13. *The great declaration of Peter*—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—to which Jesus answered, in acceptance of the title—"Blessed art thou Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father which is in heaven" (16:16, 17). The time and place of this unveiling of the majesty of the Christ was on a journey to the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi (16:13-20). There can be no doubt now in the unfolding of the plan for The World Messiah: while the time waits a little for the full revelation (16:20).

### PASSION OF THE MESSIAH

(16:21-28:20)

This section opens with the words—"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (16:21).

It seems to be quite evident that Matthew intended to mark here the beginning of a new division of his book and of a new period of the work of Jesus, characterized by the preparation of His disciples for His death. "It is already clear that He must die at the hands of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; and moreover that the minds of the disciples must be prepared for this event. From this time on, the evangelist indicates, this preparation fills a prominent place in Jesus' work and His face is towards Jerusalem, where He is to die," and be raised the third day. Peter is taken to task for his adverse criticism (16: 22, 23).

1. *Jesus makes four predictions of His humiliation, suffering, death and resurrection* beginning with the one recorded in 16: 21-23. Notice how when He predicts His death, He also predicts His rising again from the dead; there is this hopeful uplifting note.

First.—At Cæsarea Philippi (16: 21).

Second.—At Capernaum (17: 22, 23).

Third.—Near Jerusalem (20: 18, 19).

Fourth.—At Jerusalem (26: 1, 2).

2. *The certainty of the triumph of Christ in the end, and the reward of those who follow Him*, is made known in unmistakable words—"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works" (16: 24-28).

3. *The transfiguration, wherein Jesus is declared to be the Son of God* (17: 1-27). This is a glorious manifestation of the majesty of the Christ. Moses

and Elias, who appeared on the mount, were the representatives of the law and prophecy. This evidence of the greatness of the Messiah—coming now to the estate of The World Messiah—as the Son of God, was a strong consolation to the disciples in the dark days that followed (17 : 1-13). The casting out of an evil spirit (17 : 14-21). Another prediction of Christ of His death and resurrection (17 : 22, 23). The giving tribute (17 : 24-27).

4. *Jesus instructs His disciples* in regard to the meaning of ambition, humility, forgiveness and compassion in the Kingdom of God (18 : 1-35).

5. *The last journey—through Perea to Jerusalem* (19 : 1-20 : 34). He still continues His healing ministry. He answers the Pharisees concerning divorce. He blesses little children. He answers the question of the rich young ruler about eternal life. He gives instruction on riches and rewards of discipleship. He again foretells His crucifixion. He is unceasing in His efforts to make known the Kingdom of God.

6. *The last days in Jerusalem—Passion Week* (21 : 1-27 : 66). The last offer of Jesus, of Himself, as the Jews' Messiah and His final rejection.

Symbolic proclamation of Himself as the Messiah—the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple (21 : 1-17).

Symbolic prediction to the disciples of the rejection of the nation (21 : 18-22).

The mutual rejection. The Jews resist the claim of Jesus ; He reiterates His warning and prediction



(21 : 23-23 : 39). The Jews challenge His authority. The three parables of warning—(1) The two sons ; (2) The husbandman ; (3) The marriage of the king's son. Three questions of the Jewish rulers—(1) Paying tribute ? (2) The resurrection ? (3) The greatest commandment ? Here is shown the sad plight of the nation which has rejected Him as the Messiah ; it is in turn rejected (21 : 23-22 : 40). The Jews are silenced with His question—"What think ye of Christ ?" (22 : 41-46).

A discourse of Jesus against the Pharisees—showing their corrupt doctrines and practices—closing with a lament over Jerusalem and the pronouncing of the final judgment, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (23 : 1-39).

Prophetic discourse to the disciples concerning the end of the nation and the end of the age (24 : 1-25 : 46).

Preparation for the death of Jesus—(1) by His enemies, the plot to put Him to death ; (2) by His friends, the anointing ; (3) by Judas, the bargain to betray Him ; (4) by Jesus Himself ; the Last Supper ; the warning to the disciples ; the prayer and the agony (26 : 1-46).

The consummation of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews—the arrest, the trial (in which Jesus declares Himself to be the Christ—26 : 62-66), the crucifixion and death, the burial and the watch at the tomb (26 : 47-27 : 66).

**The Risen Lord and the World's Messiah**

(28: 1-20).—The resurrection of Jesus. The appearance on the resurrection morning, the report of the watch and the attempt of the Jews to suppress the evidence. The appearance in Galilee and the universal nature of the new Kingdom with its world-wide message. The commission of the disciples by "The World's Messiah" to win all nations to Him.

**The Victory of the Christ.**—With the crucifixion of Christ and the placing of His body in the tomb His career seemed to be ended. But with the resurrection all was changed. The very means taken by His enemies to suppress Him produced the beginning of a triumph—the glorious consummation of which no man can foretell.

## QUESTIONS

What was the great question in the early age of the Church? What can be said for the coming of Jesus Christ as a world movement? What of the analysis of this Gospel—into how many parts is it naturally divided? Under the first head, or section, what did Matthew see in Jesus? What can be said of the birth of Jesus? The wise men? The Herald? The threefold testimony to Jesus, by John, the Spirit and a Voice? What were the three temptations? Under the second section—How does it open, with what words? What can be said of the public ministry of Christ in Galilee? The call of the four? The fame of Jesus? The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount? The authority of Jesus? The workers sent out? How was the question of the Messiahship definitely brought to the front? What was the beginning of the rejection of the Messiah? How



was the issue joined between Jesus and the Pharisees? What was the new teaching by parables? What marked a great crisis in the ministry? Give the contrast between Jewish legalism and the principles of Christ. What was the great declaration of Peter? What did Jesus say about it? Under the third section—With what words does Matthew open it? Where does Jesus make four predictions of His death and resurrection? What does Jesus say about the certainty of His triumph? How was Jesus declared to be “The Son of God” at the transfiguration? What can be said about Jesus’ instruction to His disciples? About His last journey to Jerusalem? What can be said in regard to Jesus proclaiming Himself as the Messiah? His rejection by the Jews? Jesus’ rejection of the Israelitish nation? What of the prophetic discourse of Jesus in regard to the end of the nation? What of the death of Jesus? What can be said of the Risen Lord and the world’s Messiah? What of the world-wide commission? What of the triumph of the Christ?

## STUDY IV

### THE OBJECT OF MARK

**The New View-Point.**—Jesus Christ is presented in the Gospel of Mark as The Mighty Worker—"The Son of God." It is the same story as that of the other evangelists but a new aspect is brought out to meet the need of the Gentiles who looked at things differently from the Jews. Mark, following Peter, in mingling with the Gentiles, had come to understand something of their way of thinking. What they wanted to know about any one who was brought to their attention was, not who his ancestors were or what they had done, but what he was and what he could do by himself alone. What was his message and how could he substantiate it? Hence we find in this Gospel very few references to Jesus as the Jewish Messiah; the birth story and the genealogy are omitted; these would have comparatively small interest to the Gentile Romans.

*The emphasis* is placed upon what Christ is in Himself. It is "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1: 1). He begins to speak and His word is law (1: 22-45). He is power incarnate. He heals all manner of disease. He casts out

unclean spirits. When He speaks there is instant obedience. Everything is done with celerity; the words "straightway" and "immediately" are used over forty times to show how quickly the results He desires are accomplished. Men are amazed at the omnipotence of His command and His fame immediately spreads through Galilee (1 : 28).

*The appeal* is not for Jesus in relation to the past or the Old Testament prophecies, so potent with the Jew, but "Jesus as He appeared to His contemporaries in, and a powerful factor of, the history of His own times." The narrative is confined to the most active period of Jesus' life, chiefly to the busy Galilean ministry and the still more crowded Passion Week. It is rapid, picturesque, condensed, abrupt. It reminds one of the words of Peter : "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you" (Acts 2 : 22).

*The theology of Mark* "is not a description of how a genial humanitarian Jesus went about doing good, unconscious of any specific divine functions. Mark's Gospel is the story of Jesus as a supernatural figure, compelling homage from the invisible world of demons, and exercising the powers of divine forgiveness and authority on earth as Son of God and Son of Man. He essays to make His personality vivid, but that personality has a divine vocation which supplies the controlling interest in the story; Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In this respect the Chris-

tology of Mark is not so distant from the essential features even of the Gospel of John" (Prof. James Moffatt, "The Theology of the Gospels," p. 12).

Origin.—This Gospel contains no statement, in itself, of its origin or authorship. The author has hid himself behind his work. The ancient writers and the earliest manuscripts, however, uniformly ascribe it to Mark. It is as uniformly narrated that the apostle Peter, who knew the facts in regard to Jesus Christ as few men did, is the chief source. Papias, 70–150 A. D., bishop of Hierapolis for a number of years and intimate friend of men who knew the apostles and who, himself, was acquainted with certain disciples of the Lord, tells us, "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately whatever he remembered, not, however, recording in order the things that were said and done by the Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but afterwards, as I said, (he followed) Peter, who adapted his teaching to the need of the occasion, but not as if he were making a systematic arrangement of the words of the Lord. So that Mark did not err at all in writing some things as he remembered them. For he was careful for one thing, not to pass over any of the things that he had heard or to state anything falsely in them" (Eusebius, H. E., Vol. III, 39, quoted from Papias). "So greatly, however, did the light of piety enlighten the minds of Peter's hearers that it was not sufficient to hear but once, or to receive the unwritten teaching of the divine preaching, but with all manner of en-

treaties they importuned Mark, whose Gospel we have, and who was a follower of Peter, that he should leave them in writing a memorial of the teaching that had been orally communicated to them. Nor did they cease their solicitations until they had prevailed with the man, and thus became the cause of that writing which is called the Gospel according to Mark. They say also that the apostle (Peter) . . . authorized the work for use by the churches." This is stated by Clement in the sixth book of his Institutions and is corroborated by Papias (Eusebius, H. E., II, 15).

**Relation of This Gospel to Peter**, an apostle of the Lord and an eye- and ear-witness of His deeds and words. "A constant tradition of the early Church, reaching back to the confines of the apostolic age and harmonizing with the notices of the New Testament, certifies us that Mark was a companion of Peter (*i. e.*, in his missionary labors); was with him towards the end of his life and wrote the Gospel to preserve his Master's teaching."

*The time* of Mark's close association with Peter was probably in the ten or twelve years which elapsed between the last mention of Mark in the Acts and Paul's reference to his coöperation in Rome. It was during this period, or the latter part of it, that this Gospel was put into shape by Mark on the basis of notes of Peter's discourses, and giving a faithful record of the Apostle's remembrances of the words and deeds of the Lord.

*Personal knowledge.*—The general character of this

Gospel indicates first hand knowledge and such first hand knowledge as Peter would have. It is lifelike, definite and assured in its statements. It points to an eye-witness as directly or indirectly its author. "It alone tells us that 'Simon and they that were with him followed after' Jesus when He withdrew to a solitary place at the beginning of His ministry (1: 36); that it was Peter who called the Lord's attention to the withered fig tree (11: 21); that it was he also, with his brother and the sons of Zebedee, who asked Him on the Mount of Olives about the destruction of the temple (13: 3). Many of the things which it reports are those immediately concerning Peter, and such as would be personally known to him. Things in which Peter had a personal interest mark important stages in Christ's ministry, *e. g.*, his call, his confession, the message sent to him by the Risen Lord. Narratives like those of the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the Transfiguration, and the Agony, have details and peculiarities, as given by Mark, which suggest a more intimate knowledge of the circumstances, and such a knowledge as Peter, an actor in all these scenes, might have had."

*The style* of this Gospel remarkably resembles that of Peter's discourses in the Acts and Epistles (Acts 10: 36-40).

*The call of Peter* was to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles—to whom this Gospel is addressed. Speaking to the First Council of Churches, in Jerusalem, he says: "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good

while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe" (15:7). In this he referred back to his experience given in Acts 10; see verses 34, 35, 38 and 45.

**The Writer.**—Mark is first mentioned in the New Testament in Acts 12:12, where he comes before us in connection with Peter's deliverance from prison. He was the son of a certain Mary who lived in Jerusalem. She seems to have been a person of means. Her house was a rallying point for the Christians in those dangerous early days. Mark went with his cousin (Col. 4:10) Barnabas and Paul on the first missionary journey but, for some reason, turned back at Perga (Acts 12:25; 13:13). Paul would not accept Mark on the second missionary journey and this caused a disagreement between him and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40). Paul and Mark were afterwards reconciled, for we find him with Paul in his first imprisonment in Rome (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24). Some time later he was with Peter in Babylon (Rome?) (1 Peter 5:13). Ancient writers, with one consent, make Mark the interpreter of Peter. On his return to Asia Minor he seems to have been with Timothy at Ephesus, for Paul, during his second imprisonment at Rome, wrote to Timothy to come to him and to bring Mark with him (2 Tim. 4:11). In the Gospel of Mark some think the writer has mentioned himself in the "man bearing a pitcher of water" in preparation for the passover (14:13) and with the young man who



followed Jesus on the night of the betrayal "having a linen cloth cast about him, over his naked body" (14: 51, 52). Outside the New Testament he is described as an evangelist, as Peter's companion in Rome, as sent by Peter on a mission into Egypt and as the founder of the church in Alexandria.

*His close association* with the leaders in the early Church gave him exceptional opportunities to know the exact truth about Jesus Christ. His extensive travels, and experiences with all sorts and conditions of men, enabled him to test the truth and to see the splendid results which came through its acceptance.

**The Readers.**—For whom was this Gospel written? Evidently not for the Jews but for the Gentiles. Explanations of Hebrew and Aramaic names are given—"Boanerges" (3: 17); "Talitha cumi" (5: 41); "Corban" (7: 11); "Eloi, Eloi, lama, sabachthani" (15: 34; etc.). Money is reduced to Roman currency (12: 42). So too Jewish customs, such as seasons, washings, localities and the like are explained; also the position of the Mount of Olives, the "Preparation" or the day before the Sabbath, etc. (7: 3, 4; 13: 3; 15: 42). These explanations for Jewish readers would have been without any significance. The Old Testament has here a much smaller place than in the other evangelists. Matthew seems so impregnated with the Old Testament that it has almost a Hebraic aspect; while Mark has only twenty-three quotations of one kind and another and these belong almost entirely to our Lord's sayings.

*This Gospel found and met the need of the Gentile Romans* on their own level, and sought to raise it to a higher one. The key to the character of the Romans was power but it was the power of the state and limited to this world. It was force manifesting itself in action and mighty deeds. The Romans were great conquerors, imposing their will upon subject nations. In time the Roman state was deified as the greatest manifestation of power and then the Cæsar who ruled over all. Scripture and prophecy, so potent with the Jew, would count but little with the Roman. Reason and philosophy, so dear to the heart of the Greek, would often be openly scoffed. But both Jew and Roman believed in the supremacy of law; with the former it was the law of the unseen God, with the latter the law of the empire. Both started with the idea of duty; with the former it was allegiance to the theocracy, with the latter to the state. Mark found the material level of the Roman and sought to raise it to the higher spiritual one. Christ is presented as The Mighty Worker whose will was law. He is the Master not only of the seen but of the unseen universe. He has, and exercises, supreme power over nature, men, disease and death. He speaks and the storm is stilled; a few loaves and fishes in His hand increase, at once, to feed thousands. He speaks and the leper is cleansed, the blind receive their sight and the dead are raised. He has power to lay down His life and power to take it again. His kingdom is declared to be omnipotent. It is a spiritual

and unseen kingdom, more powerful than any earthly state, and destined to last forever.

Here, thus early, was presented the invitation and challenge of Christianity. The issue was clearly presented. The acceptance of the invitation for allegiance to the higher spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ brought thousands into the fold of the early Church. The acceptance of the challenge of the supremacy of the authority of the Christ, by the Roman Empire, brought about the bloody persecutions which created such havoc in the ranks of the first Christians.

**Characteristics.**—Each Gospel makes a special contribution to the story of the Saviour of Israel and of the world. Mark is “a succession of pictures in which a painter represents a complete history.”

*Brevity.*—It is the shortest Gospel with its number of chapters at sixteen, while Matthew has twenty-eight, Luke twenty-four and John twenty-one.

*Directness.*—Here is no attempt at elaboration. We have a plain direct businesslike narrative of things as Mark saw them himself or heard them from Peter or others. It is a record of facts and not a product of art or a work of reflection. It is the story of a man who wastes no words in the telling of it.

*Compactness.*—Every sentence is fraught with meaning. On this account the transitions often seem abrupt. Yet the words are full of charm and color as they depict the wonder-working life of Jesus Christ. The movement of events is energetic and active. Jesus calls men and they “straightway” follow Him.

He teaches and heals and “immediately” His fame spreads throughout all Galilee (1 : 28). In the first chapter, typical of the rest, we find condensed the ministry of John the Baptist, the temptation, and the beginning of the ministry in Galilee.

*Vividness and Realism.*—“There is a sharpness and color in the descriptions of this Gospel which might challenge comparison with the best achievements of the art which conceals art. The peculiarly graphic, lifelike quality of its narrative at once arrests attention. It makes us see things as if they were beneath our own eye in all their sharpness. Thus it is that it chooses so often the direct form of speech—‘Peace be still’ (4 : 39); ‘Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man’ (5 : 8); ‘Send us into the swine’ (5 : 12); ‘Come ye yourselves apart’ (6 : 31); ‘Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him’ (9 : 25). Things are given as if the eye of the writer were upon the objects and his pen followed his eye. It is a reproduction rather than a representation.”

*Circumstantiality.*—Mark is rich in details which impart a certainty and distinctiveness to the narrative. The scenery is painted with a thousand touches—“the house, the sea, the followers, the growing throng, the names of persons, the numbers of the men and of the animals and the pieces of money, the greenness of the grass and the pillow in the stern of the boat on Gennesareth.”

*Action and Power.*—The acts rather than the words

of Christ are set forth—especially the deeds which show His power. The greater discourses, with the Sermon on the Mount, are omitted. The report of the parables is meagre—only four are recorded (4 : 3-8 ; 4 : 26-29 ; 4 : 30-32 ; 12 : 1-11), with three of the minor or germ parables (2 : 21 and 22 ; 3 : 24-26). Considerable space is given to dialogue and not a few of our Lord's briefer sayings are recorded, yet these seem to be introduced because of their connection with events and acts of power—the one great exception is the Eschatological Discourse in the thirteenth chapter. Jesus is represented as having superhuman power. He had the gift of miracle. This Gospel shows how He frequently exercised that gift and what impression He produced by it upon the people and upon His disciples (1 : 27 ; 2 : 12 ; 7 : 37). It is plainly set forth "How the multitudes recognized it, and believed in it, and were eager to avail themselves of it, by bringing their sick and distressed ones to Him, not doubting that He was able to relieve and heal ; how they were so certain indeed of this that they thought it enough if they could but get Him to notice them, or could even touch His garments (1 : 32 ; 3 : 10 ; 5 : 28 ; 6 : 56)." Large space is given to recording eighteen special acts of power-miracles : The healing of the demoniac in the synagogue (1 : 23-28) ; Peter's wife's mother (1 : 30-31) ; the leper (1 : 40-45) ; the paralytic (2 : 3-12) ; the man with the withered hand (3 : 1-5) ; the stilling of the storm (4 : 35-41) ; the Gadarene demoniac (5 : 1-17) ; the woman with

the issue of blood and the daughter of Jairus (5 : 21-43); the five thousand and the walking on the sea (6 : 30-52); the Syrophœnician woman's daughter and the deaf mute (7 : 24-37); the four thousand and the blind man at Bethsaida (8 : 1-9, 22-26); the lunatic boy (9 : 17-29); Bartimæus (10 : 46-52) and the withering of the fig tree (11 : 12-14). In these acts of superhuman power the humanity of Jesus is shown, for most of them come under the class of "The Healing Miracles." He has taken upon Himself a nature identical with our own, with all His power (11 : 12; 4 : 38; 14 : 36; 4 : 34; 8 : 2; 14 : 8; 4 : 37-40; 15 : 5), for in this way He is able to do the most for us.

**Arrangement of Matter.**—After the introduction (1 : 1-13) this Gospel falls into two great blocks of narrative—"The one occupied with the Galilean ministry (1 : 14 to 9 : 50), the other with the events of the last week in Jerusalem (11 : 1 to 16 : 20). There is a difference between the two. In the first the narrative, while always vivid and at some points full, is often compressed. In the second it is minute, circumstantial and more of the nature of a journal; this Passion Week narrative occupies about one-third of the whole Gospel." The intervening story (chapter ten) is an account of the journey from Galilee, through Perea and Judea, to Jerusalem.

**Place of Writing and Date.**—*Place.*—There is nothing in this Gospel that gives the slightest evidence as to the place of its composition. Ancient tradition,



however, in so far as it bears upon this question, is almost wholly on the side of Rome.

*Time.*—It is not easy to specify the exact date, as the Gospel itself is undated. Some scholars have contended for a very early date and others for a very late date. The time has been placed as early as 42 or 43 A. D. or between the years 57 and 58. For an early date it is pointed out that some of the colophons of our ancient manuscripts speak of the book as published ten or twelve years after our Lord's ascension. From many considerations, from an examination of the text and ancient testimony, it is now quite generally held that this Gospel came into its present form in the first part of the sixth decade of the first century.

*Relation to Matthew and Luke.*—Matthew, Mark and Luke, known as the Synoptical Gospels, have much in common and substantially cover the same field; yet cover it in different ways. The Gospel of Mark has only fifty verses peculiar to itself and not found in Matthew and Luke. Mark has a certain proportion of matter which appears in Matthew and not in Luke, or in Luke and not in Matthew; and in narratives which are common to the three, or to Mark and one of the others, he adds in not a few cases considerably to our knowledge by his richer detail. Each Gospel has its own field to cover, using common material for its own specific purpose. But the sources from which these Gospels draw their material and the use they make of it constitutes what is known as The Synoptical Problem. For a most able discussion of



this problem, the student is referred to Professor Peake's "Critical Introduction to the New Testament," pp. 101 to 124.

As we have the Synoptical Gospels, in their present form, Mark is looked upon as the first written.

Value.—The worth of the writing of Mark, as the testimony of one who had an intimate friendship with Peter and Paul and a first hand knowledge of the triumphant progress of early Christianity, cannot be overestimated.

### QUESTIONS

What is the new view-point set forth? Where is the emphasis placed? What is the appeal? What is the theology of Mark? What is the origin of this Gospel? What is its relation to Peter? What was the time of Mark's close association with Peter? What about the style of this Gospel? To whom was Peter's call to preach? What can be said of the writer of this Gospel? For what readers was this Gospel written? How did this Gospel meet the need of the Gentile Roman? What are some of the characteristics of this Gospel—Brevity, Directness, Compactness, Vividness and Realism, Circumstantiality, Action and Power? What can be said of the arrangement of the matter? What is the place of writing and the date? What is the relation to Matthew and Luke? What is the value?

## STUDY V

### THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHRIST

The Supremacy of the Authority of Jesus Christ was a burning question with the first disciples and their converts. Was it before and above all else? That this supremacy was believed and taught is abundantly attested. Its repeated assertion was what brought Christianity into a direct and bitter conflict with Judaism and the Roman Empire. Had Christianity been content to take a second place or a place alongside of other religions—or to bow to the power of the Roman state—there would have been no controversy, and it doubtless, very soon, would have perished as an obscure Jewish sect.

*It was claimed that in Jesus Christ all the demands of true religion had been met* and that He was the center from which all its forces should operate. He was the first true king of the true community of the true God and as nothing could be conceived as supplanting Him, He would reign forever with irresistible power.

*Mark was not, in his Gospel, simply jotting down a number out of many incidents which had been told him about the Christ*, but he realized that he was writing with a tremendous purpose about the supreme object of faith for all men. He had witnessed at close range, in his attendance upon Paul and Peter in their mis-

sionary journeys, the difficulties of the mighty battle in which Christianity was engaged.

*We are left in no doubt as to whom Mark is writing about and how he regards Him*—"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). "Jesus"—the personal name. "Christ"—the official title—"The Anointed One"—"The Messiah." "The Son of God"—not the son of Abraham or the son of David but "The Son of God." Thus he clears the way for what he has to say about "One" whom he regards as all in all.

*"Jesus, in His teaching, rested upon His own authority as absolute.*—He did not hesitate to place His own word above the Mosaic law; He proclaimed His message now as His own, now as His Heavenly Father's, with no distinction; He taught His disciples to look to Him as their only means of entrance into the higher life—a colossal assumption surely, if He were but a man; a clear statement and a challenge to all ages, sublime in its boldness, but justified by the divine greatness of His character, the matchless sublimity of His teaching, and proved to succeeding generations by the historic success of His work" (Dr. Jeremiah W. Jenks, Professor of Political Economy in Cornell University, "Political and Social Significance of the Life and Teachings of Jesus," p. 39).

**In What Does Christ's Authority Consist?—How is it shown?** These questions are answered in many ways in the Gospel of Mark. Yet it is not Mark who is answering them so much as it is his plain reporting

of what Christ said and did. The answers are shown to lie on the surface of the narrative. Notice how chapter after chapter (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc.) bears its testimony to the power of the Christ.

*"He taught them as one that had authority and not as the scribes"* (1 : 22). The answers to the questions in regard to the relation of God to man, of man to God, of man to man have never been surpassed. He also ordained others to teach and to heal (3 : 13-15).

*"With authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him"* (1 : 27). The great problem to-day is, as of old, to clean out the unclean spirits who degrade the individual and foul the social life. It is only the uplifted Christ who can conquer them, as of old, and make life worth living.

*Power to cure the sick* (1 : 30, 31 and 34).—The healing touch is a great blessing. Physicians possess it in different degrees. In Christ it was at its fullness.

*Authority to forgive sins*.—Christ did not leave this point in doubt, for He said : "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Notice the positiveness of this statement (2 : 5-10).

*The extent* (3 : 22-27) *and growth* (4 : 30-32) *of Christ's authority* are shown by what He says in regard to His kingdom and that of Beelzebub and the parable of the mustard seed.

*He had control over nature* (4 : 36-40).—At His word a great storm was stilled on lake Galilee. He multiplied loaves and fishes to feed a multitude. We are learning much in these days about the control

over nature. The president of the United States touches a button and, at once, an electric impulse starts over a wire on its journey of three thousand miles across a continent and the wheels of the ponderous machinery of an international exposition begin to revolve. But why use a wire? We take away the wire and we send by "wireless," still using the button. But why use a button? As means have been found to do away with the wire, may not means be found to do away with the button and a man may stand and by an impulse of his will do that which has hitherto been done by a wire, a button and an electric current? What we to-day call "a miracle is not really a breach of the order of nature; it is only an apparent breach of laws that we know, in obedience to other and higher laws that we do not know." St. Augustine ("De Civitate Dei," I, 8) said in the early centuries, "We say that all miracles (or prodigies, portenta) are contrary to nature; but they are not. For how can that be contrary to nature which takes place by the will of God, seeing that the will of the great Creator is the true nature of everything created? So miracle is not contrary to nature, but only to what we know of nature (contra quam est nota natura)." Herbert Spencer once said to Professor John Fiske of Harvard University, "You cannot take up any problem in physics without being quickly led to some metaphysical problem which you can neither solve nor evade" (Prof. John Fiske, "Life Everlasting," p. 50).

*He had power to raise the dead* (5 : 22-24, 35-42).

He calls back to life the daughter of Jairus. There is no argument for this power; it is exercised as the most natural thing in the world.

*The people marvel at His mighty works* (6 : 1-6, 14, 56).

*Peter's testimony to the Christ* (8 : 27-29).

*The attestation of His authority* in the event of the transfiguration (9 : 1-7). "This is my beloved Son : hear Him" (9 : 7).

*Christ has authority over the future* (9 : 38-50) ; His authority is exalted (11 : 9, 10) ; The delegation of His authority (13 : 34-37) ; An attempt is made to break the power of the Christ (14 : 10 to 15 : 47) ; Jesus declares that He is the Christ and that He will come again in great power (14 : 61, 62) ; The victory for the Christ (chapter 16).

*The use of Christ's power* was always to help, to benefit and to heal. It was never exercised on His own behalf. It was, and is, for the uplift of the individual, society and the state. "*The Christian religion has proved itself of practical authority* in politics, and statesmen are realizing, as never before, that Christ cannot be left out as a factor in public affairs."

## ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK

*The Gospel of Mark falls naturally into four divisions :*

The beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ (1 : 1-13).

The ministry in Galilee (1 : 14-9 : 50).

The ministry in Judea (10 : 1-52).

The ministry in Jerusalem (11 : 1-16 : 20).

## THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY

(1 : 1-13)

This introduction, consisting of only thirteen verses, is short but very much to the point. Every sentence is packed with meaning. It is "Good News"—Gospel—about Jesus Christ, "The Son of God." Mark has no time or space for circumlocution. He states in the fewest possible words, yet every word a word painting of wondrous beauty, that the "Son of God" has come in accordance with ancient prophecy. His forerunner has proclaimed Him as "One mightier than I," although all the land has been startled and stirred by John the Baptist's preaching. The Christ will baptize with the Holy Ghost. The Christ is authenticated—we are not left to conjecture as to His place and power—at His baptism by a voice from heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Here are two statements in thirteen verses in regard to Christ as the "Son of God," the supreme topic of this Gospel. He is not represented as one who slowly gathers a consciousness of His place but one to whom His proper place is assured from the beginning.

## THE MINISTRY IN GALILEE

(1 : 14-9 : 50)

*This is divided into two parts*—The Eastern (1 : 14 to 7 : 23) and The Northern (7 : 24-9 : 50).



**The Eastern Galilean Ministry (1 : 14-7 : 23).—**Galilee, the scene of this ministry, was the most northerly of the four provinces of Palestine. It was very fertile and very populous. "The great highways from Egypt to Damascus and from Phœnicia to the Euphrates passed here and made it a vast hive of traffic. Besides the larger cities of Capernaum—the headquarters of Christ—Bethsaida and Chorazin, the shore of the lake of Galilee was studded with towns and villages, and formed a perfect beehive of swarming human life. The territory about the lake bore abundant crops and fruits of every description and the waters teemed with fish, affording employment to thousands of fishermen. Many boats for fishing, transport and pleasure moved to and fro on the surface of the lake, so that the whole region was a focus of energy and prosperity." What was done in this section was known very quickly throughout Palestine and in the Eastern as well as the Western World; the caravans were the great news carriers. The place for the dissemination of the "Good News" of the Messiah was well chosen.

*The story of Christ's work in Eastern Galilee is told in three parts.*

1. *From the first announcement of the kingdom and the call of the first disciples to the beginning of the conflict with the official classes (1 : 14-3 : 12).* Jesus begins preaching in Galilee. He calls four fishermen. He spends a Sabbath in Capernaum. He preaches in synagogues throughout all Galilee (1 : 14-45). The

reading of this first chapter shows how intense His activity was. He speaks and teaches and heals with authority. Multitudes throng Him. His fame spreads throughout all the region. "We see here the author's conviction, as announced in the first line of his book, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and that Jesus believing, from the beginning, in His own Messiahship and Divine Sonship, convinced His followers of it, not by affirmation or by argument but by living; so the evangelist, holding at the outset to the Messiahship of Jesus, depends not on formulated argument, but on the story of the life to carry this conviction to the readers" (Prof. E. D. Burton, "Introduction to the Gospels," p. 40).

2. *From the call of the twelve apostles* to the rejection at Nazareth (3: 13-6: 6). In choosing "The Twelve" Jesus will leave nothing to chance. He has a plan and will have them know of this plan that, being rightly instructed, they may instruct others. When He is teaching the multitude which throng Him (3: 20) they must take account of what His kingdom is (3: 22-35), how it differs from that of Beelzebub and what it means to be a citizen of that kingdom. He teaches by the seaside and shows by parables the principles and the growth of this kingdom (4: 1-34). The teaching about the kingdom is followed by some wonderful manifestations of power (4: 35-5: 43), the stilling of a great storm on lake Galilee, delivering of one possessed of a legion of devils, healing a woman with a bloody issue and the raising from the dead the

daughter of Jairus. Bitter opposition is encountered by Jesus when He goes back to His home town. It was acknowledged that many mighty works were wrought by Him, but the people, unable to reconcile His origin with His claims, rejected His claims (6: 1-6).

3. *From the sending out of "The Twelve" on a mission to the withdrawal of Jesus to the borders of Tyre and Sidon (6: 7-7: 23).* The unfolding of the plan of Jesus is seen as He instructs His disciples as to what their message shall be and how it should be delivered (6: 7-13). The incident of King Herod and his opinion of Jesus (6: 14-29).

The return of "The Twelve" who tell Jesus what they had done and taught (6: 30).

Jesus continues His former work in Galilee with the reappearance of the same features of teaching and healing and the thronging multitudes, with the works of power of feeding five thousand and the walking on the water (6: 31-56). Jesus encounters new opposition in the Scribes and Pharisees who come from Jerusalem. They are shown the difference between a religion that is of the heart and that which is of a worthless tradition, which does not decrease their opposition (7: 1-23).

**The Northern Galilean Ministry (7: 24-9: 50).**

*This story is told in two parts.*

1. *First withdrawal from Galilee into the borders of Tyre and Sidon and the return (7: 24-8: 26).* Here occurs the incident of the casting out of an un-

clean spirit from the daughter of a Syrophœnician woman (7 : 24-30). The return to Galilee. The deaf man healed. The four thousand fed. A blind man of Bethsaida receives his sight (7 : 31-8 : 26).

2. *A second withdrawal from Galilee* "into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi" and the return (8 : 27-9 : 50). On the way to Cæsarea Philippi Jesus acknowledges that He is the Christ and teaches that the kingdom of His power must be won through suffering and death (8 : 27-38). Jesus is transfigured and acknowledged as the beloved Son of the Father. On coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus heals a demoniac boy (9 : 1-29). Jesus returns to and passes through Galilee (9 : 30-50). He again predicts His death and resurrection (9 : 30-32). He teaches what true greatness is in His kingdom, also true humility and self-denial (9 : 33-50).

## THE MINISTRY IN JUDEA

(10 : 1-51)

This chapter, ten, is an account of the incidents and teaching of Jesus on His journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. The discourse on divorce (10 : 1-12). The incident of the blessing of little children and its lesson for the kingdom (10 : 13-16). The question of what one can do to inherit eternal life (10 : 17-27). The question of gain in the kingdom (10 : 28-30). Jesus again predicts His death and resurrection (10 : 32-34). The question of precedence in the kingdom

(10: 35-45). Jesus restores the sight of blind Bartimæus of Jericho (10: 46-52).

## THE MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM

(11: 1-16: 20)

This section occupies about one-third of the Gospel of Mark, which shows the great importance attached to the narrative. The events are reported, in a journal like form, as they took place from day to day. "Jesus causes Himself to be announced as Messiah; comes into conflict with the leaders of the people; predicts the downfall of the Jewish temple and capital." He rises from the dead, as He said He would, and becomes the victorious Messiah and ascended Lord.

### *Passion Week.*

*Sunday.*—The Holy City at last reached, Jesus makes a triumphal entrance as its Lord and Master—the long expected Messiah (11: 1-11).

*Monday.*—The fig tree, which bore no fruit, symbolical of the Jewish nation, is cursed and withers away. The temple is cleansed (11: 12-19).

*Tuesday* (11: 20-13: 37).—This is the great day of teaching in the temple. Christ's comment on the withered fig tree and the good in faith (11: 20-26). Christ's authority is challenged. He answers the challenge (11: 27-33). Jesus takes His critics to task and shows them in the parable of the wicked husbandman, and in the questions concerning the tribute money, the resurrection, the greatest commandment and giving, the true nature of His kingdom and its

requirements (12:1-44). The prophetic discourse concerning the downfall of the temple and the city (13:1-37), after Jesus left the temple.

*Wednesday* (14:1-11).—The Jews plot to put Jesus to death. Jesus is anointed in the house of Simon the leper. Judas makes a bargain with the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus to death.

*Thursday* (14:12-52).—Jesus now enters the shadow of the cross. The last supper, symbolical of the broken body and shed blood of Christ, is instituted (14:12-26). Peter's denial is foretold (14:27-31). The agony in Gethsemane (14:32-42). The betrayal and arrest of Jesus (14:43-52).

*Friday* (14:53-15:47).—The trial before the Jewish authorities in which Jesus, in prospect of an ignominious death, declares that He is the Christ, "The Son of the Blessed" (14:53-65). Peter's denials (14:66-72). The trial before Pilate (15:1-20). The crucifixion and burial (15:21-47).

**The Resurrection** (16:1-8).—Holy women visited the tomb very early in the morning of the Sabbath day following, to find that Jesus had risen from the dead, as He said He would.

Appendix (16:9-20). Brief summary of the appearances of Jesus, after He had risen from the dead.

## QUESTIONS

What can be said of the supremacy of the question of the authority of Jesus Christ with the early disciples? Are we left in any doubt as to the one about whom Mark was writ-

ing? In what does Christ's authority consist? Teaching—forgiveness of sins—healing the sick—control over nature—raising the dead? In an analysis of the book of Mark into what divisions does it naturally fall? What can be said of the beginning of the ministry? What can be said of the ministry in Galilee? Into what two parts is it divided? Into how many parts are these two divided? What can be said of the ministry in Judea? What can be said of the ministry in Jerusalem? What are the events of the days? What can be said of the resurrection?



## STUDY VI

### THE PURPOSE OF LUKE

**The Preface of the Gospel of Luke.**—We have here the advantage of a direct statement, from the author, in regard to his purpose.

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of the things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”

*Many other narratives of the words and acts of Jesus Christ were already in existence.*—Within thirty years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, His Gospel had won its way from Jerusalem to Rome and Christian churches had been established in the large as well as the small cities throughout the Roman Empire. During the latter half of this period Paul had written his epistles, copies of which were widely circulated amongst the churches. It is not known how early the written attempts at Gospel making began: some

scholars place them quite early. Prof. James Moffatt, of Oxford, in his introduction to "The Literature of the New Testament" tells us that "by at least 50 A. D. such notes and collections (in regard to the words and works of Christ) may have begun to exist in rough form. . . . By the time of Paul's later literary activity evangelic narratives were in existence here and there. . . . The primary need for these is to be found in the fact that a new generation was rising, who were dependent for their history of Jesus upon a fast diminishing company of eye-witnesses, in the rapid extension and consolidation of the Christian communities." With these many narratives, Mark, in the Greek, and Matthew, in the Hebrew, at least, were well known, for Luke makes use of both. That he used other narratives and oral traditions is evident from the large amount of new matter, not found in Mark or Luke, which he incorporates in his Gospel. All was attested by eye-witnesses and companions of Jesus (1 : 2).

*The Threefold Purpose of Luke.*

First—Historical. Luke was a painstaking and careful investigator of the sources of his information in regard to Christ; he was not a personal follower of the Lord. "He professes to write a complete, correct and chronological (in the sense of well arranged, or logical) account of the primitive narrative (or inheritance) as received from the first generation of disciples. This attempt was neither new nor superfluous. Luke had numerous predecessors in the enterprise, but their

work did not wholly satisfy his purpose; he resolved to make a fresh essay." He desired to furnish Christians a more accurate knowledge of their Lord's life.

Second—Religious. The life of Christ is, to Luke, of supreme religious importance. He sees in Him "The Power" which is to regenerate the world (4: 16-21, 32-41). Here is his primary interest; it is similar to that of John (John 20: 31).

Third—Personal. Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, its sequel, are addressed to a person—a certain Theophilus. In this it resembles Paul's epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Theophilus is a genuine proper name; nothing is known of him "except what may be inferred from Luke's language, viz., that he was not simply an outsider interested in the faith, but a Christian who desired or required fuller acquaintance with the historic basis of the Christian Gospel; also that he was a man of rank. Luke's emphasis on the relation between Christianity and the Roman Empire, and his stress upon the temptations and hindrances of money, would tally with the hypothesis that his friend belonged to the upper and official classes," but nothing is known beyond these inferences.

**The Author.**—The third Gospel was assigned to Luke by the Church of antiquity and his authorship has never been disputed. Irenæus of Asia Minor, who had ample opportunity to sift the facts and who wrote in Gaul in the second century, says: "Now if any one reject Luke, as if he did not know the truth, he will manifestly be casting out the Gospel of which

he claims to be a disciple." Irenæus quotes from nearly every chapter. The Muratorian canon, probably somewhat earlier, ascribes this Gospel to Luke. Later on, trustworthy tradition, "as preserved by Eusebius and Jerome, has it that Luke was a native of Antioch in Syria, or at least had his usual residence there, and that he was a proselyte or follower of Paul."

*To Luke was also assigned the authorship of The Acts of the Apostles*, the continuation of the Gospel of Luke. They are both addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1) and the style is the same.

*Three things may be said of Luke*, which made him a proper instrument for the important work which he did.

First—He was a converted Gentile Greek. Thoroughly acquainted with Greek ideals, he knew how to adapt the Gospel of Christ in order to win the Greek.

Second—He was a physician. Paul calls him (Col. 4:14) "Luke, the beloved physician." It has been thought that Luke accompanied Paul from Troas to Philippi (Acts 16:11, 12) on the occasion of their first meeting, to minister to Paul in a malady from which he was suffering (2 Cor. 12:7). "There is a remarkable work by Dr. Hobart on 'The Medical Language of St. Luke,' in which the author makes a minute comparison of the words used in the third Gospel and The Acts with words employed by Galen, Hippocrates, and other medical writers of antiquity; the result is that many of our evangelist's favorite words, and many of the words used by him exclusively among

New Testament writers, are found to be characteristic of those authors. . . . It will be seen, too, that in several instances where Luke is giving an account of a miracle of healing, he enters into details of the condition of the sufferer more fully than the other evangelists." All of which goes to show that Luke was a painstaking and accurate observer and that he carefully made sure of his facts before recording them.

Third—He was a travelling companion of Paul and was with him in the city of Rome. He had ample and abundant opportunity to meet those who had seen Christ in the flesh and had been with Him. He also, journeying with Paul, saw the marvellous results of the preaching of the Christ in heathen communities. Paul mentions him three times by name in his epistles (Phile. 24; Col. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 11). The steadfast and courageous character of Luke is incidentally brought out in the fact that, in Paul's second imprisonment, a time of great danger and sorrow, Luke only dared stand by him (2 Tim. 4: 7-11). The painstaking care of Luke is shown in his writing of the Acts: when he is not with the company, he uses the personal plural pronoun "They"; when he is with the company he uses "We" or "Us"; the latter are known as the "We-sections" (Acts 16: 10-40; 20: 6-21: 18; 27: 1-28: 16 or 31).

**Arrangement of Material.**—In the preface to the third Gospel, Luke states that, "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most

excellent Theophilus." The setting down of things "In order" and "Accurately" was the special care of Luke.

*There is a chronological order.*—Certain dates are given and these follow in succession of time. "Luke alone, among the evangelists, sets his Gospel in relation to contemporary great world movements. He fixes his dates with reference to the Jewish kings, the reigning Cæsars, and provincial Roman governors (1:5; 2:1; 3:1). The author's desire is to be accurate and definite in the historical relations of the narrative. Another reason is that, at the time this Gospel was written, there was no universal accepted numerical calendar, some people using the Greek Olympiads, some the names of Roman consuls, some the reigns of the emperors. Again Luke, in this way, desires to emphasize the world-wide character of Christianity. He is somewhat a man of the world and he likes to think of the Gospel as a factor in the life of the world. A Gentile himself, dedicating his book to a Gentile of rank in the Roman world, he is the last man to take a sectarian and exclusive view of a movement that sprang up in Jewish circles, but soon burst all national and racial bounds. He is not one to allow the Gospel to run in a small canal apart from the Empire's life. He will not have his Gospel confined to the Ghetto. To supercilious Roman gentlemen, the church may seem to be but a Jewish sect. He would like to open their eyes to its true nature as the leaven that is to penetrate every stratum of society. . . .



He desires to win an entrance for the Gospel among the citizens of the Empire. Here he is just treading in the footsteps of his master. There is an imperial breadth of outlook."

*There is a logical order of events.*—After the preface (1 : 1-4) this Gospel falls naturally into six divisions.

First (1 : 5-2 : 52), Narrative of the birth, childhood and youth of John the Baptist and Jesus.

Second (3 : 1-4 : 13), The preparation for the public work of Christ.

Third (4 : 14-9 : 50), Christ's Galilean ministry.

Fourth (9 : 51-19 : 28), Christ's journey to Jerusalem, through Samaria and Perea.

Fifth (19 : 29-23 : 56), The events of Passion Week.

Sixth (24 : 1-53), From the resurrection of Christ to His ascension.

**Sources and New Matter.**—The third Gospel has much in common with both Mark and Matthew. The Gospel of Luke has the framework of Mark. We know that Mark and Luke were together, in Rome, with Paul (Col. 4 : 10, 14 ; Phile. 24). Professor Harnack, in his "Date of The Acts and the Synoptic Gospels" (page 133), says : "Tradition asserts no veto against the hypothesis that St. Luke, when he met St. Mark, in company with St. Paul the prisoner, was permitted by him to peruse a written record of the Gospel history which was essentially identical with the Gospel of St. Mark given to the church at a later time." The arrangement of matter in Luke is different from that in Matthew—"Thus while Matthew



contains great blocks of continuous teaching, in Luke the teaching is more mingled with the narrative out of which it is seen to spring. For instance the Lord's prayer in Matthew (6:9-13) occurs as a part of the Sermon on the Mount, but in Luke (11:1-4) it is given by Jesus because His disciples having watched Him in prayer, have asked Him to teach them to pray."

Each Gospel writer, being near to the original sources, had abundant materials from which to draw. No Gospel professes to record all that Jesus said and did (John 20:30, 31; 21:25).

It has been calculated that if the contents of the Synoptic Gospels are divided into 172 sections, of these 172 Luke has 127, Matthew 114 and Mark 84; and of these 172 Luke has 48 which are peculiar to himself, Matthew has 22 and Mark has 5.

If we reckon by the number of verses Matthew has 1,068 verses, of which 337 are not found in Mark or Luke; Mark has 674 verses of which fifty are peculiar to this Gospel; while Luke has 1,149 verses of which 612 are only found there.

The matter peculiar to Luke is rather more than half of the whole Gospel.

Of the recorded miracles six are peculiar to Luke, three to Matthew and two to Mark. Of the parables, eighteen are peculiar to Luke, ten to Matthew and one to Mark. The most notable narratives, peculiar to Luke, appear in the first three chapters, and in Christ's journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27).

It is to Luke's painstaking research that we have

preserved to us such miracles as, "The raising of the widow's son at Nain," "The miraculous draught of fishes," "The ten lepers," "The healing of Malchus," etc., and such parables as, "The two debtors," "The good Samaritan," "The rich fool," "The lost sheep," "The lost piece of silver," "The prodigal son," "The unjust steward," "Dives and Lazarus," "The Pharisee and the publican," etc.

Among the remarkable utterances and incidents, alone set down by Luke, are John the Baptist's answers to the people (3: 10-14); Christ's weeping over Jerusalem (19: 41-44); the conversation with Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration (9: 28-36); the bloody sweat (22: 44); the sending of Jesus to Herod (23: 7-12); the address to the daughters of Jerusalem (23: 27-31); the prayer, "Father, forgive them" (23: 34); the penitent robber (23: 39-43); the disciples at Emmaus (24: 13-31); particulars of the ascension (24: 50-53, etc.).

**Characteristics.**—There are certain marked features of this Gospel which distinguish it from its companions, give it an individuality of its own and reveal the spirit and temper of its author.

*Glad tidings for all men.*—It is a Gospel of joyous song. Luke is the first Christian hymnologist. In the opening chapters are the songs which the Church has ever since been delighted to use, as they embody her highest hopes and aspirations: "The Ave Maria" (1: 28-33), the good tidings of the angel Gabriel to Mary; "The Magnificat" (1: 46-55), Mary's song of

rejoicing, "My soul doth magnify the Lord"; "The Benedictus" (1:68-79), Zacharias' hymn of praise that "the Lord God had visited and redeemed His people Israel"; "The Gloria in Excelsis" (2:13, 14), the praise of the heavenly host of angels at the birth of the Christ, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men"; "The Nunc Dimittis" (2:29-32), the rejoicing of Simeon, when he took the young child Jesus in his arms and blessed God that his eyes had seen the salvation, through the Christ, that he longed for, "A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel." This gladness of this Gospel shines out again and again; it is specially prominent in the fifteenth chapter of the three parables of the finding of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost boy.

*Praise and Thanksgiving.*—Mention is made again and again of glorifying God. There is here an exaltation of spirit which moves men to praise (2:20; 5:25; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47).

*Prayer.*—We find here more frequent references to prayer than in the other Gospels. There is not only a record of the Lord's prayer, as in Matthew, but Luke alone tells us that our Lord prayed on "six distinct and memorable occasions: 1. At His baptism; 2. After cleansing the leper; 3. Before calling the Twelve Apostles; 4. At His Transfiguration; 5. On the cross for His murderers, and 6. With His last breath. Luke insists, reporting Christ, on the duty of unceasing prayer (18:1; 11:8; 21:36)." In the

parable of the Pharisee and the publican (18 : 10-14) he shows what kind of prayer is acceptable and what is not. In the parable of the friend at midnight (11 : 5-13) and of the unjust judge (18 : 1-8) he shows the need of a persistent energy and a holy importunity in prayer.

*Good-will and tolerance.*—It is the Gospel of a Saviour for all men and of a universal good-will to all classes and conditions. The Christ came heralded by angel carols (2 : 13, 14) ; He departs blessing men with uplifted hands (24 : 50).

What a contrast between the Jewish religion which Christ found and that which He came to preach ! The former had degenerated into a religion of hatreds. " The then ' religious world,' clothing its own egotism under the guise of zeal for God, had for the most part lost itself in a frenzy of detestations. The typical Pharisee hated the Gentiles ; hated the Samaritans ; hated the tax gatherers. He despised poverty and despised womanhood. There was a deadly blood feud between the Jews and the Samaritans. Into this atmosphere of ill-will and intolerance Luke represents our Lord coming as Christus Consolator towards every age, either sex, all nations, all professions, men of every opinion and every shade of character ; He is the good Physician of bodies and souls ; the Gospeller of the poor ; the Brother who loves all His brethren in the great family of men ; the unwearied Healer and ennobler of sick and suffering humanity ; the Desire of all nations ; and the Saviour of the world, who went about doing good." Christ taught the largest toler-

ance when He chose the Good Samaritan, rather than the indifferent priest of the cold-hearted Levite, as the type of love of neighbor. He rebuked two of His disciples who would call down fire from heaven upon an inhospitable Samaritan town.

*Womanhood.*—What a host of good women are mentioned and commended! Mary and Elizabeth, the mothers of Jesus and John the Baptist. Mary is supposed to be one of the eye-witnesses from whom Luke got much of his information, recorded in the first chapters. Then there are the lifelike portraits of Anna, the aged prophetess; the Magdalen, as one from whom Jesus cast out seven demons; the widow at Nain, whose son He restores to life; Mary and Martha, whom we see serving and worshipping; the women of Jerusalem, who sympathize with Jesus on His way to the cross. He ever delights to honor womanhood.

*Sympathy with the poor and the outcast.*—The records are frequent of the mercy of Christ towards the humble and the despised. It was an angel who appeared to Mary, the humble maiden of Nazareth. It was a heavenly host which announced the birth of the Christ to the humble shepherds. Jesus chose the disciples, who were to be nearest to Him and who were to be His spokesmen after His resurrection, from the humble fishermen of Galilee. The poor, the lame, the halt are invited to a great supper. The humble are to be exalted. The point, in the parables of the Rich Man and Dives and the Rich Fool, is not against riches but that the rich man, in his thoughtless self-



indulgence, is apt to neglect his suffering neighbor. Riches will, if great care is not taken, stifle everything good in a man's heart. Luke is the only evangelist that records our Lord's advice that when we make a feast we should not be content to invite our personal friends and our wealthy neighbors but should gather in the poor and afflicted for our guests. It is the heart that is to be kept humble towards God.

There is special care for the outcast. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (19: 10). The three parables in the fifteenth chapter are all to this point. He seeks to save, unto the uttermost, the publican, the harlot, the prodigal. "To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (1: 79).

*The world ministry.*—Christ was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the glory of His people Israel (2: 32). In Him was fulfilled the prophecy, "That all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (3: 6). Christ opened (4: 16-21) and closed (24: 45-47) His ministry with a declaration of its universality.

**When and Where Written.**—It is not easy to determine just where this Gospel was given to the world. Luke must have been some time in gathering the material for it and its companion work, The Acts of the Apostles. It is undated in itself. The attempt to determine the date from internal evidence has not resulted in a complete success. Many scholars favor a date after the destruction of Jerusalem, or between 70 and 80. It is perfectly possible to hold, with other schol-

ars, to a date previous to 70, the year in which Jerusalem was destroyed. The limits, not wide, of the dates proposed do not count against the perfect authenticity of this great work. Professor Harnack, in his "Date of The Acts and the Synoptic Gospels" (page 124), asserts: "It seems now to be established beyond question that both books of this great historical work—The Gospel of Luke and The Acts—were written while St. Paul was still alive."

**For What Readers?**—What is the central idea? It is certain that each Gospel sets forth Jesus Christ plainly as the Saviour of men, but the writers present the same truth in different forms.

*When the Gospels were written there were three great races—the Roman, the Greek and the Jewish—with their distinctive racial ideas. These ideas have survived the races.*

In the Roman race, "the will, or that part of man which pushes to action, and enables him to control and mould nature and mankind, was the predominant element." The Roman was the man who did things. He believed in power but it was the power of the state and limited to this world. He attempted and accomplished herculean tasks in the building up of a colossal Empire; his thoughts did not go beyond this. His measure of a man was what he could do here and now. He made his gods in the likeness of himself.

The Jewish race had made all the great ventures into the unseen world. It was the law of an unseen, all powerful, God to which the Jew owned allegiance



and not to that of any earthly potentate, however powerful. The God of the Jew was too great to have any image made by which to worship Him. What had been revealed by this God in the past would be his law. The spirit, or that part of man which links him to God, was the predominant element with the Jew.

The Greek race conceived its mission as that to perfect humanity. The Greeks were the representatives of reason and humanity in the ancient world. They were the cosmopolites of their age. But in their efforts to be broad they stumbled. They made their gods in their own likeness. They deified not only the virtues but the base passions, which were considered as godlike as the virtues.

It would have been a strange Gospel which would not take into account these racial ideas and attempt to mould them to its new conception of things. It has been asserted that Mark, in writing his Gospel, took into account the Roman conception of things—hence he begins on his level and raises him to a higher one. Jesus is represented as the Mighty Worker, whose will is law in this world and the world to come. Matthew begins his Gospel with an appeal, to the past and to the prophets, that Jesus is the long expected Messiah sent by the unseen, all-powerful God, whom the Jew had worshipped in the past.

*Luke's Gospel has a world-wide character all its own. It appeals to different readers. It meets the need of the Greek for the real perfection of humanity.—It is not without significance that our New Testament books*

are written in the Greek language. There were many good things about the Greek way of looking at things. He considered that his mission was to perfect humanity. He stood for the supremacy of reason; he had made all the great adventures into the world of philosophy. He brought the arts to a perfection which, in many respects, has never been equalled. He was a world man; he could meet all men on the common platform of humanity as the Jew and Roman could not. But there were some very serious defects in the Greek way of looking at things. Beside making gods of his virtues and base passions, to be worshipped alike with equal fervor, this bright world was his all. "His theory blotted out the other and higher world and left him utterly worldly, having no hope and without God in the world. This world was his home, his province, his grave. He sought his happiness in it. His only wish was that it might last forever. He sought not only to get the utmost out of his mind but also to get the utmost pleasure out of his body, without a thought of the virtue or vice of it. This world's revels, dances, theatrical exhibitions, races, battles, academic groves—where literary leisure luxuriated—these were blessedness, and his hell was death. The Greek poets speak pathetically of the misery of the wretch from all that is dear and bright." When Paul preached the resurrection from the dead at Athens, he was openly scoffed at. In many ways the Greek way of looking at things is beginning to make itself felt in our modern civilization—to its detriment.

The problem of Luke was to meet the Greek on the broad platform of humanity and to ennoble it. He presents Jesus Christ as the ideally perfect Divine Man—as well as Divine Saviour—touching man on all sides and having an interest in man as man. He came into the world, heralded with songs; disease and pain fled at His touch; He revealed the beauty of holiness; He was interested not only in the best but in the worst of men. The longing of the soul of the Greek for the bright here and the hereafter was met. His multitude of deities was swept away and in its place came that of a vision of a great and righteous God. Christ was shown, by Luke, as the universal God Man, the pattern and brother for all ages.

“This Gospel represents Christ to us in His intimate, and yet His universal relationship to men, the Mediator between the one God and all men.”

### QUESTIONS

The purpose of Luke—what has the preface to say about it? What can be said of other narratives already in existence? What was the threefold purpose of Luke in writing? What can be said of the author? What three things may be said of him? How is the material arranged? What can be said of the sources of this Gospel and the new matter embodied in it? What are the characteristic features of this Gospel—Glad tidings for all men, Praise and thanksgiving, Prayer, Good-will and tolerance, Womanhood, Sympathy for the poor and the outcast, The world ministry? When and where written? For what readers was it written? What were the three great racial ideas? How did Luke meet the wants of the Greek?

## STUDY VII

### THE CERTAINTY OF THE SAVIOUR

**The Appeal to the Facts.**—In the end it is this appeal which wins any case. Luke takes his stand upon the "*certainty*" (1 : 4) *of the reality of the Christ*. He does not argue. He does not plead. With him it is historical proof which counts. He consults eye- and ear-witnesses. He personally associated with those who had personally associated with Jesus during His life upon earth. He presents a careful historical record chronologically arranged without discussion. There is no indefiniteness here, yet withal there is a charm and picturesqueness about the telling which has commanded and held the attention of the world ever since this book was written.

Before Luke wrote his Gospel he had come to a vivid realization of the power and the world-wide character of Christianity. He had seen this religion, bursting the bounds of Judaism and pursuing its victorious course over the Roman Empire, subdue to itself, and gather into its fold, all sorts and conditions of men of different races, mental types and religious beliefs. He had not only been a keen observer of the course of events but also an active worker with Paul, the great missionary. He was well qualified for his work.

The best presentation of any cause is in the showing of the solidity of the foundation of fact upon which it rests. Argument may be met by argument but a fact, well established, does not admit of argument. A fact can take care of itself under any and all circumstances. Luke wisely chose to base his Gospel upon the fact of Christ. It was this fact which would make its own plea to all men for all time.

*The fact of the person of Christ.*—Here is no shadowy, ill-defined figure, but one who is born at a certain time, in a certain place and who, on coming to manhood's estate, stands out as the chief person of his race and all races. His is the strong personality about which all the events of the book group themselves. With Him a new era began not only for His own race but for the whole world. Notice how in the very beginning of this Gospel Luke ties up the narrative of the birth of Christ with contemporaneous events—"There was in the days of Herod the king" (1:5), "There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed" (2:1), "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar" (3:1). Luke wants us to know just when Christ came and what was happening in the world at large. He tells us that Mary, the mother of Jesus, declared—"From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (1:48): a wonderful prophecy of what has actually come to pass. Again he tells us that Simeon, a devout man, waiting in the temple for the consummation of his hope of seeing the Christ in the flesh, declared, when

he saw the child Jesus, that He was "A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel" (2: 25, 26, 32): here is another remarkable forecast of what has actually come to pass. Christ is to-day the light of the Gentiles and the Jews have in Him their greatest hero. So has Christ's personality impressed itself upon the world that this world reckons its time, A. D., as from a new age which began with Him.

*The fact of the work of Christ.*—It is not always easy for a man to find the work for which he is fitted, or for others to find it for him. But with Christ, according to Luke, there is no doubt as to the work which He came to do. Here is no groping after a mission. One has only to read the first three chapters to see how clearly this work is defined. The program is set forth here, which He literally followed. He is born—"A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (2: 11). At the opening of His ministry, in the city of Nazareth, in the synagogue, He read from the prophet Isaiah—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book and gave it again to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in



your ears ' " (4 : 16-21). But the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, from which the above is quoted, is a description of the work of the Messiah. Jesus, in declaring this Scripture fulfilled in Him, declared Himself to be the Messiah. In His parting instructions (24 : 44-53) to His disciples it is shown how Jesus had broadened His mission, so that it might include all nations.

*The fact of the authority and power of Christ.*—With the wisest and strongest men power and authority exist in limited degrees. In this narrative of Luke power and authority exist unlimited in the Christ. Men hesitate to believe in acts that are beyond the ordinary capacity of man to accomplish : this is one reason for the hesitancy to believe in acts of power and authority of the Christ, which we call miracles. But we are beginning to see, in our day, that a man with a highly endowed mental equipment and a superior knowledge of the laws of nature may easily do things which are perfectly incomprehensible to the ordinary man. A higher power will always dominate a lower. The lower law must give way to the higher. We have by no means solved the problem of the miracles of Christ ; but we do begin to see the light that this high and all commanding personality of Christ easily controlled nature. Luke would have been derelict in his duty, as a historian, if he had not given to us the accounts, as he had them vouched for, of the wonderful works which Christ did. He does not stop to argue about them, he records them, which is what we want in a historian. In the person of Christ is a



mighty being whose word is with power (4 : 32) and authority (4 : 36). He heals the sick, He commands nature, He raises the dead. We are here dealing, according to Luke, not with heresay or argument, but with well attested facts.

*The fact of the teaching of Christ.*—First—Manner. He taught with Authority. He did not quote precedents as other teachers ; it was an “ I say unto you.” He spoke as One whose own eyes were gazing on the objects of the eternal world.

He taught with Graciousness. There was an infinite tenderness in all that He said. He had come to win men to a new life and man’s soul was a thing infinitely precious to Him. His object was to seek and to save the lost. “ It mattered not under what humble dress or social deformity the pearl of the soul was hidden ; it mattered not even beneath what rubbish and filth of sin it was buried ; He never missed it for a moment. Therefore He spake to His hearers of every grade with the same respect. Surely it was the graciousness of divine love itself, uttering itself from the innermost recess of the divine being, that spoke in the parables of the fifteenth chapter of Luke.”

He taught with Power. “ They were astonished at His doctrine for His word was with power.” His hearers were profoundly moved when He spoke.

He taught with Boldness. “ Lo, He speaketh boldly.” He did not hesitate to expose shams and hypocrisy.

He taught with Originality. “ Never man spake

like this man." His was a new philosophy of sorrow and suffering; a new law of self-sacrifice and a new law of love for fallen humanity.

He taught with Penetration and Vitality. His words reveal men to themselves and they impart new life.

Second—Form. He mostly used short, pithy sentences packed with the weightiest truths. Never long; He ceases to speak when the interest is at its highest point. He taught by paradoxes, parables, figures of speech as well as by direct discourse. He was a diligent student of the Old Testament Scriptures, of nature, of society, of ways of business; He used them all. He took the most common objects and made them glow with spiritual truth. The multitudes were captivated by this Wonderful Teacher; they thronged Him wherever He appeared.

Third—Matter. His great subjects were :

(A) "The Kingdom of God," "The Kingdom of Heaven." He labors to express what this Kingdom is; the character required of its members; His Father's and His own relation to it. The incidents of His teaching were—how to escape from sin, become like God and attain to eternal life. In its spiritual character this "Kingdom of God" was opposed by the Jews who were looking for the Messiah to establish a great temporal kingdom on this earth.

(B) "The center and soul of Christ's preaching was Himself. He contained within Himself the new era. He not only announced it, but created it. The

new character which made men subjects of the Kingdom was to be got from Him alone. Therefore the practical issue of every address of Christ was the command to come to Him, to learn of Him and to follow Him."

## ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

After the preface this Gospel falls naturally into six unequal parts.

### THE LITERARY PREFACE

(I : 1-4)

Luke here states his object in writing this Gospel.

The key word is "Certainty." The plainly expressed desire is to assure Theophilus of the historical reality of the Christian truths in which he had been instructed.

### I. THE ADVENT OF THE SAVIOUR

(I : 5-2 : 52)

1. *The promised birth of John the Baptist*, the Forerunner of the Saviour (I : 5-25).

2. *The annunciation to Mary*, of the birth of Jesus, by the angel Gabriel (I : 26-38).

3. *The visit of Mary to Elizabeth*.—Songs of thanksgiving of Mary and Elizabeth for the honor given to them (I : 39-56).

4. *Birth and youth of John the Baptist*, the Forerunner of the Saviour. The song of thanksgiving of his father, Zacharias (I : 57-80).

5. *The birth of Jesus*, the Saviour, in a manger. The announcement, by an angel, to the shepherds—*"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."* The thanksgiving song of the Heavenly Host (2 : 1-20).

6. *The circumcision of Jesus and His presentation in the Temple*.—Songs of thanksgiving of Simeon and Anna when they saw Jesus. The youth of Jesus (2 : 21-52).

## 2. PREPARATION FOR THE WORK OF THE SAVIOUR

(3 : 1-4 : 13)

1. *The preparatory preaching* of John the Baptist. He announces the speedy coming and the work of the Saviour (3 : 1-20).

2. *The baptism of Jesus*.—The descent of the Holy Ghost and a Voice from heaven declaring of Jesus, *"Thou art my Beloved Son ; in thee I am well pleased"* (3 : 21, 22).

3. *The genealogy of Jesus* is traced to Adam and to God (3 : 23-38).

4. *Jesus' victory* over the tempter (4 : 1-13).

## 3. THE WORK OF THE SAVIOUR IN GALILEE

(4 : 14-9 : 50)

1. *Events in Nazareth*.—Jesus now begins a very active career in His presentation of Himself as the promised Messiah and the Saviour. He exhibits His

divine power, at first, for the salvation of the chosen people Israel. His fame is heralded throughout all Galilee. He goes into the synagogue in Nazareth and taking the Old Testament Scriptures, turns to the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah. He declares that this prophecy of Isaiah, in regard to the Messiah and Saviour to come, is fulfilled in Himself—"This day," He says, "is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." He could not speak more plainly and more to the point. It is upon this declaration that He is rejected and is obliged to leave Nazareth. Luke is in no doubt, in his effort after "Certainty," that the Messiahship of Jesus was not an afterthought, but one that He claimed for Himself at the beginning of His career (4 : 14-30).

2. *Events in Capernaum.*—In this city Jesus, at the first, casts out an unclean spirit from a man and heals many who are sick. His fame continues to increase. The people marvel at His power and authority over evil spirits. The devils, which were cast out by Him, cried out, saying, "Thou art Christ, the Son of God" (4 : 31-41).

3. *Events in Galilee.*—Jesus now seeks a wider field and preaches throughout Galilee (4 : 42-44).

4. *From the call of the first disciples to the choosing of the Twelve* (5 : 1-6 : 11).—In the miraculous draught of fishes (5 : 1-11), the cleansing of the leper (5 : 12-16), and forgiving the sins of the paralytic man before healing him (5 : 17-26), Jesus shows His power to control nature, heal disease and forgive sin. The call of Levi from the receipt of custom (5 : 27, 28) is fol-

lowed by a discussion upon fasting and the proper keeping of the Sabbath day (5 : 29-6 : 11), in which Jesus makes His position very clear.

5. *From the choosing of the Twelve Apostles to the sending them out* (6 : 12-8 : 56).—The choosing of the Twelve was preceded by Jesus praying all night, on a mountain, to God (6 : 12-16). After the calling of the Twelve, Jesus sets forth the great principles of the Kingdom of God in the Sermon on the Mount (6 : 17-49). The working out of man's faith and the compassion of Jesus are shown in the healing of the centurion's son and the raising from the dead of the widow's son of Nain (7 : 11-17). The ability and willingness of Jesus to help, heal and save men, is shown in His reply to the disciples of John the Baptist and His rebuke of a Pharisee (7 : 18-50). Jesus continuing to tour Galilee, He goes into every city and village and preaches the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God, the twelve being with Him (8 : 1-3). In the parable of the sower He shows how the growth and development of the Kingdom of God depend upon how men hear and heed its behests (8 : 4-18). In His reply to His mother and His brethren He shows the difference between natural and spiritual kinship (8 : 19-21). In the stilling of the tempest on the lake of Galilee, the healing of the Gadarene demoniac, the cure of the woman with an issue of blood and the raising from the dead of the daughter of Jairus, Jesus again reveals His supreme power over nature, evil, disease and death (8 : 22-56).



6. *From the sending out of the Twelve Apostles to their return* (9: 1-17).—The Twelve, having been fully instructed, are sent forth to preach what Jesus has taught them and with His full authority. When they return they give a report of their success to their Master. Being in a desert place belonging to the city of Bethsaida, the people, from all quarters, throng them and Jesus gives a great feast to thousands of people.

7. *From the great declaration of Peter that Jesus is "The Christ of God," and the transfiguration of Christ, to His final departure from Galilee* (9: 18-50).—Jesus had declared, according to Luke, that the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah (61: 1) was fulfilled in Him at the very opening of His ministry in Galilee (4: 18-21). Now at the close of that ministry He asks His disciples what impression He has made during that ministry. He asks what people say of Him. Among the answers He receives is that of Peter—"Thou art the Christ of God," which He acknowledges to be the true one. He follows this acknowledgment with the unexpected announcement that He must be rejected of His people and be crucified. This is followed by the astonishing revelation that He will be raised from the dead upon the third day. All this shows, according to Luke, how fully Jesus understood His mission as the Messiah and Saviour and how He sought to prepare His disciples for that which was shortly to come to pass. The transfiguration scene in which there was a voice from heaven—"This is my



beloved Son"—must have still further prepared His disciples, as they remembered it afterwards, for their work after Jesus had been raised from the dead and had ascended from whence He came.

#### 4. THE JOURNEY OF THE SAVIOUR TO JERUSALEM

(9: 51-19: 28)

This journey was through Samaria and Perea.

This section of Luke records the departure of Jesus for the final conflict in Jerusalem. It is the travel narrative of a "slow, solemn and public progress from Galilee to Jerusalem" of which some of the events seem to be grouped by subjective considerations. Many incidents and parables related here (the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the good Samaritan, etc.) are not found in the other Gospels. Jesus understands fully that an ignominious death awaits Him in Jerusalem. He looks forward to His supreme sacrifice there; yet in that sacrifice He sees the triumph of His cause. When He foretells His death He also foretells His resurrection—"The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be slain and be raised the third day" (9: 22). "And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (9: 51).

1. *The final departure from Galilee (9: 51).*

2. *A Samaritan village refuses to receive Him.—*

This gives Jesus an opportunity to show what the spirit of His disciples should be (9: 51-56).

3. *Three answers to three men*, who would follow Him, as to what following Him meant (9: 57-62).

4. *Seventy disciples are sent out*, "two by two, before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come." These are given instructions in regard to the preaching of the coming Kingdom (10: 1-24).

5. *In the parable of the Good Samaritan*, the entertainment in the house of Martha and Mary, and the talk on prayer (with the Lord's prayer) Jesus shows who is the good neighbor, the one thing needful, and the necessity for being earnest in prayer (10: 25-11: 13).

6. *In the incidents related in chapters 11: 14-13: 21 is shown the contrast between the Kingdom of God and Satan*; true religion and false conceptions of it. Here is also recorded the opposition with which the Pharisees met the teaching of Jesus and what He said about it. The incidents are--Casting out demons (11: 14-28); The sign of Jonah (11: 29-36); Jesus pronouncing woes against the Pharisees (11: 37-54); Warnings against hypocrisy and covetousness (12: 1-59); The Galileans slain by Pilate (13: 1-9); The woman healed on the Sabbath (13: 10-21).

7. *In answer to the question, "Are there few that be saved?"* (13: 23) Jesus shows the true way of salvation, that it is not confined to any class or race, but is for all who accept its terms (13: 22-35). Chapter 14 is a

continuation—in the incidents of the man healed on the Sabbath, the wedding guest, who to invite to a feast, the guests who made excuses when invited to a great supper and the discourse on counting the cost of following Christ—of the answer to the question—“Are there few that be saved?” For salvation it is shown that there must be humility, regard for the poor, obedience of the divine call, the laying of proper foundations and a whole-hearted earnestness.

8. *In the three parables of grace*, given in chapter 15—the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost boy—the cause of Christ’s coming is shown to be, from His own statement, to seek and to save the lost. In this seeking His power is exerted unto the uttermost. In the two parables of warning, given in chapter 16—the unjust steward and Dives and Lazarus—some of the evil consequences of failing to seek the higher riches are shown.

9. *As Jesus continues to draw near to Jerusalem* He continues His discourses on His mission, He heals the sick, He utters parables and He still further prepares His disciples for the consummation of His work in His death and resurrection (17:1–19:28). The following are the incidents, parables, etc.: Discourse concerning offenses, forgiveness and faith (17:1–10); The cleansing of ten lepers (17:11–19); Discourse as to “How and when the Kingdom shall come” (17:20–37); The importunate widow (18:1–8); The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican and the blessing of little children (18:9–17); The incident of the rich

young ruler who asks the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (18:18-30); Jesus again predicts His death and resurrection (18:31-34); Jesus restores the sight of a blind man near Jericho (18:35-43); Jesus enters and passes through Jericho on His way to Jerusalem. We have here related, on His way, the incident of the visit to Zaccheus and the parable of the pounds (19:1-27); Jesus now ascends up to Jerusalem (19:28).

## 5. THE PASSION WEEK OF THE SAVIOUR (19:29-23:56)

This section covers the time from Sunday to Friday. The incidents of these days are narrated by all four evangelists with more fullness of detail than any other portion of the life of Christ.

1. *Jesus rides in triumph to the city* of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. He predicts the destruction of the city, which He wanted to save, when He approaches it. He enters the city and cleanses the Temple. At the very beginning of this great last week, He asserts His claim as the Messiah and His authority over the Temple. The multitude cry, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven and glory in the highest" (19:29-48).

2. *The issue between the leaders of Israel and Jesus* is now joined. They see no way out of either receiving Him, and acknowledging His claims as the Messiah, or His death. It is quite plain that they are deliberately planning His death (20:19, 20). In

chapters 21 and 22 Jesus is sharply taken to task in regard to His authority—"Tell us, it is asked, by what authority doest Thou these things?" When He answers He is put upon the rack again. It is plain that, whatever He may answer, the leaders of Israel are determined to put Him to death. Jesus in turn asks questions and shows His questioners the danger of their course of action and what it will result in for them and their nation. The questions, discourses and incidents are as follows: The question of the authority of the Christ (20: 1-8); The reply of the parable of the vineyard let out (20: 9-18); The question about the tribute money (20: 19-26); The question of the Sadducees in regard to the future state (20: 27-39); The question of Christ, by which He silences the scribes (20: 40-44); Warning of Christ against the hypocrisy of the scribes (20: 45-47); The lesson of the widow's mite (21: 1-4); Jesus foretells the destruction of the Temple (21: 5, 6); Jesus unrolls the map of the future and gives the signs and warnings of the last times (21: 7-38).

3. *The end is at hand.*—The death of Jesus is decreed. The plots of the chief priests and scribes only wait the opportune time (22: 1-6). Jesus, fully aware that His death is determined upon, institutes "The Last Supper" in which He sets forth the significance of His death (22: 7-38). The last events hasten to their consummation. The agony in the garden of Gethsemane; the betrayal by Judas (22: 39-49); The arrest (22: 50-53); The trial before the priests and

Peter's denials with the first derision (22 : 54-65); The trial before the Sanhedrin in which Jesus declares His office (22 : 66-71); The trials before Pilate (with the first acquittal) and before Herod (with the second derision and second acquittal, 23 : 1-12); Pilate attempts to release Jesus but the Jews choose Barabbas; Jesus is condemned to death (23 : 13-26); The wailing women (23 : 27-31); The crucifixion, the death and burial of Jesus (23 : 32-56).

## 6. THE TRIUMPH OF THE SAVIOUR

(24 : 1-53)

No cause ever seemed so hopelessly lost as that of Jesus when He was crucified. It is scarcely possible to place ourselves back at that time and to appreciate the feelings of the followers of Jesus the day after the entombment. They had hoped for so much and now there was nothing left to hope for.

It is little to be wondered at that when the first report of the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead was heard by the disciples that they could not credit it. It was good news indeed, but too good to be true. When the good news was realized to be true their joy exceeded all bounds. There was now no trouble to make converts.

1. *The resurrection* (24 : 1-49).—The announcement by the two men "in shining garments," to the women who had come to the sepulchre, that Jesus had risen from the dead (24 : 1-12); The appearance of Jesus to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (24 : 13-32);



The appearance of Jesus to the eleven, on the first resurrection day, when He asked them to touch and handle Him that they might be convinced of the reality of His body (24: 33-49); Jesus declared the broad scope of His work for all nations (24: 47).

2. *The ascension* (24: 50-53).—Jesus, having lingered upon earth long enough to perfectly assure His disciples, ascended on high.

### QUESTIONS

In Luke's appeal to the facts upon what does he take his stand? What had Luke come to realize before he wrote his Gospel? How is any cause best presented? What does Luke have to say about the fact of the person of Christ—His work, His authority and power, His teaching (matter, form and manner)? Into how many parts, after the preface, is Luke's Gospel divided? What is the key word of the literary preface? Give the six points under the advent of the Saviour. Give the four points under the preparation for the work of the Saviour. What can be said of the work of the Saviour in Galilee—events in Nazareth—events in Capernaum—events in Galilee—the points from the call of the first disciples to the choosing of the Twelve—the points from the choosing of the Twelve to the sending of them out—from sending out the Twelve to their return—from the great declaration of Peter to the final departure of Christ from Galilee? What can be said of the journey of the Saviour to Jerusalem and the nine points set down under it? What can be said of the Passion Week of the Saviour and the three points set down under it? What can be said of the triumph of the Saviour—the resurrection and ascension?

## STUDY VIII

### THE CLEAR VISION OF JOHN

**The Object.**—The age in which the Gospel of John was written was very different from that of Paul's Epistles and the Synoptic Gospels. Jerusalem, the Holy City, had been destroyed and the Temple overthrown. Christianity had separated itself from Judaism. It was definitely appealing to a Gentile world. Its converts were now mostly Gentile. The hotly debated question, so prominent in Paul's time, as to whether a man ought to become a Jew, and obey the Jewish law, before he became a Christian, had ceased to have the slightest significance.

After the more than fifty years that had elapsed since the resurrection of the Christ, Christianity found itself in a new political, philosophical and social atmosphere. During this time the Gospel had been preached throughout the Roman Empire. There had been a multitude to embrace the faith and many had been martyred in the great persecutions that had arisen. The greatness of Christ and His work were more clearly seen by the Church.

Old opponents had passed away but new ones had taken their places. The arguments formerly used in the Jewish synagogue and the appeals to Old Testament prophecy were losing their force.

The problem now was how to meet and to win the Gentile Greek—the master thinker of the world. The Greek had already seen the reason in, and the beauty of, the Gospel. He had taken its message to himself but in taking it—here was the trouble—he had mingled it with his philosophy which gave rise to heresies that perplexed the ablest teachers in the Church. This was an unexpected development.

Christianity, to live its own life and to make its own way, had now to be disentangled from Greek philosophical speculations, which would have smothered it, as Jewish legalism had threatened its life at a former time. In Ephesus, the hotbed of Greek heretical speculations, the crisis was an acute one.

It was the clear vision of John which revealed the solution of the problem. It is in his Gospel that this matter is really settled. The Gentile Greek is addressed not in a Jewish vocabulary but one which, speaking a universal language, he can understand. It is the old message of Mark, Matthew and Luke, but it is given with a new phraseology and a new setting adapted to the times. The central doctrine—"The Incarnation of Christ"—of the Christian faith is brought to the front (1:1, 14)—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh." The reader is never allowed to lose sight of this doctrine. At the close of the Gospel the author states his purpose—with a due regard for what the other evangelists have done—"And many other signs truly did

Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."

"This idea of life to be derived from Jesus, and from no other source, is prominent in the whole Gospel. Christ is the source of life of a real and lasting kind, and it can only be obtained through mystic contact with Him. This is because Jesus is the full revelation of God in human life." Christianity here rests upon a foundation of its own.

**The Subject Matter.**—The theological aspect of this Gospel is very prominent. It is that which constitutes its value for the Christian faith. It is that which brought it, at the very first, into the arena of controversy; and it is that which keeps it there. We have this matter, in brief, set forth in:

*The Prologue* (I: 1-18).—This is the most careful, compact and to the point piece of writing in the New Testament. "The 'Word,' or Greek 'Logos,' here stands for the divine preëxistent nature of the Messiah, which became flesh and dwelt among us as Jesus Christ, the God-man." The working out of this theme engages the whole of the Gospel.

"The Greek term 'Logos' denoted not simply reason, but the speech in which reason uttered itself. Now the Greek philosophical speculations upon the 'Logos' had been primarily concerned with the problem of the relations between the created universe and

God, which was supposed to be solved by the theory that the divine reason pervaded the world. Philo, working upon the Jewish conception of the 'Word,' made the 'Logos' the organ of God's self-revelation to men as well as His creative power." So far so good, but there were many features in the Philonian view which were not so clear and which did not accord with John's idea. But here was a term which the Gentile Greek could understand and an idea which greatly interested him. For John's purpose the Logos-idea was more important in its exodus than in its genesis. It was a point of contact between Greek philosophy and Christianity.

In this fourth Gospel the "Logos" or the "Word" was baptized into the Christ, the God-man, divine and preëxistent, which became flesh and dwelt amongst us. "It served to guide generations of believing men into a fuller apprehension of Jesus than the previous Messianic categories of the synoptic theology could have done."

Notice how phrase after phrase is most carefully chosen, in the prologue, to give right ideas of the "Word," or Christ, and to prevent misconceptions. "In the beginning" (1:1), is the way in which the Old Testament opens. The "Word" was in the beginning; He did not come into existence then; He was preëxistent. He was not an inferior æon or emanation, subsequent to the original order of things. He was in vital relations with God. He was God by nature. "It was through this 'Word' alone that God

created the universe. Through the 'Word' everything came into being, and apart from the 'Word' no existence came into being—a side stroke at the Gnostic theories of creation through angels or a plurality of inferior æons, of matter as self-existent or of the Creator as distinguished from the Redeemer. . . . Then follows the work of the 'Word.' Life—in the pregnant sense of the term—was in the 'Word' as divine, and that life was the light of men, as opposed to the Gnostic doctrine that the powers of creation were at issue with the highest revelation of God. . . . Those who accept Him—to them He has given the right of becoming God's children, that is to those who believe in His name, who owe their birth to God, not to human blood, nor to any impulse of the flesh, nor (as some Gnostics taught) to the human will. So the 'Word' became flesh (instead of a phantom Jesus, as the docetic Gnostics taught), and tarried among us, and we saw His glory—glory such as an only Son has, who came from His Father, full of grace and truth. . . . From His fullness have we all received grace after grace."

**Selection and Arrangement of Material.**—The fourth Gospel, after the prologue (1:1-18), may be divided into three unequal parts. The theme, as stated before, is the Incarnation of Christ—"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (1:14). That which follows is an elaboration of this theme. There were many



other signs which Jesus gave, many words which He spoke, many journeys which He took of which no account is taken here. The material used is selected and arranged (21 : 25) with a certain carefully thought out purpose and to produce a certain result of faith in an Incarnate Saviour (20 : 30, 31).

1. Christ reveals Himself to the world as the Eternal Word (1 : 19-12 : 50). He is recognized and testified to by John the Baptist, by the Spirit, by the first disciples and a miraculous sign. His words and works bear out His claims. He proclaims Himself "The Light of the World." He is antagonized yet triumphant.

2. Christ makes an inner revelation of Himself to His disciples (chapters 13-17). He manifests Himself to His disciples at the Last Supper in the bread and the wine and in His discourses that they, after His death and resurrection, may carry forward His work and win the world for Him.

3. The humiliation and glorification of the Christ (chapters 18-21). The Christ is subjected to a humiliating death but that very humiliation results in His exaltation and glory, for it was for the saving of men.

**Double Purpose.**—The effort of this Gospel is to prove, on the one hand, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and on the other hand to lead its readers into such belief in Him that they may be truly united to Him and "have life in His name."

In its attempt to prove that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," the Gospel of John resembles the Gospel

of Matthew, but its apologetic purpose is avowed even more distinctly and is carried out with even more consistency and thoroughness than in the latter work. Moreover the author undertakes to show not simply that Jesus is the Messiah, as Matthew does, but that He is a spiritual being of a higher order than man. This in fact is what the term "Messiah" or "Son of God" means to him when he applies it to Jesus. Jesus is not simply a man called and anointed by God to do a particular work in the world; He is the incarnation of a preëxistent heavenly being, who came from God and at the end of His earthly career returns to God. Thus the author represents Jesus as living constantly under the sense of His higher nature, and all His words and deeds are interpreted in the light of it. His omniscience and His omnipotence are frequently emphasized and viewed as manifestations of His higher nature; and the miracles which He performs are not primarily for the good of others, as in the Synoptic Gospels, but many of them at least are done simply as signs to show that He has superhuman power and that He is "the Christ, the Son of God" (20: 30, 31). And so the author's apologetic purpose leads him to represent John the Baptist solely in the character as a witness to Jesus (1: 29-36); leads him to emphasize the testimony of Christ's enemies to the wonderful nature of His signs and miracles (7: 45, 46; 11: 46, 47; 12: 19, 42); leads him to call attention to the fact that the betrayal of Jesus and His death at the hands of His enemies were only a fulfillment of His

own purposes, that they took place only in His own good time and in accordance with His will, and were thus a sign of His power and not of His weakness (10:17, 18; 18:4; 19:11). Many other objections against the Messiahship of Jesus are met and answered by Jesus Himself in this Gospel: for instance, that He has appeared without proper legitimation (9:29-41); that He has not the Spirit of God, which the true Messiah should have, but on the contrary a devil (8:48-58); and finally that He suffers death instead of abiding and setting up a permanent kingdom as the true Messiah is to do (10:15-18; 11:51, 52; 12:32).

But the Gospel of John, though so largely apologetic both in form and in content, is not simply an apology. As already said, it is also an effort to lead its readers into such belief in Christ as shall truly unite them to Him and thus give them life. And so the significance of Christ to the believer, and the true relation between them, are emphasized at great length, that relation being represented in genuine Pauline fashion as a complete mystical unity. It is thus not only Christ, in Himself, in whom the author is interested, but also Christ in His relation to man, and particularly to believers. Indeed, the saving fellowship of the believer, with him, is the ultimate aim of the work. The author would prove Jesus to be the Christ in order to arouse faith in Him, and thus bring about the fellowship which means salvation" (20:31) ("A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age," by Prof. A. C. McGiffert, D. D., pp. 609, 610).

**Relation of the Fourth Gospel to Mark, Matthew and Luke.**

*The four points of agreement.*—The fourth Gospel presupposes, on the part of its readers, a knowledge of the other three. It aims, with a purpose of its own, to supplement and not to supplant them. "The day is now over, or almost over, when this Gospel and the other three can be played off against each other, as though the latter were matter-of-fact and homogeneous chronicles and the former a spiritual reading of an earlier tradition. . . . Recent criticism of the synoptic Gospels has brought them nearer to the fourth Gospel. . . . All the Gospels were written for the promotion of faith in Christ and the motto of John 20:31 would also apply to the synoptics, but in a special sense to Mark; for in spite of the difference of angle from which Mark and John view the Messianic dignity of Jesus, both aim at demonstrating that He is the Son of God" (Prof. James Moffatt, D. D., "Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament," pp. 540, 541). The same eminent authority also says, in his "Theology of the Gospels," page 174: "To sum up: The Jesus of the primitive Church was a Jesus whom believers hailed and worshipped as the Christ of God. My point is that an examination of the earliest records, of the sources behind Mark and the other two synoptic Gospels, shows that the Messianic drapery, or the setting of His person, was not the result of Paulinism impinging upon the pure and orig-

inal memory of a humanitarian figure, who lived and died for the sake of a message which amounted to little more than a doctrine of theism plus brotherly love. This is a conclusion upon which several lines of research converge." Here is where the synoptists agree with John in setting forth the Christ of God as the supreme object of faith. Further—"When the filial consciousness of Jesus, in the synoptists, is seen to be prior to the Messianic, the starting-point of the special Christology of the fourth Gospel is at once granted."

Upon the historical narrative there are four main points of agreement by the four evangelists: 1. The incarnation of the Son of God. Each evangelist sets this forth in his own way. 2. The life of the Son of God on earth in human form and subject to human conditions. 3. They all concur in the great importance of the events of Passion Week; for, out of twenty-eight chapters, Matthew devotes eight; Mark, out of sixteen, devotes six; Luke, out of twenty-four, devotes six and John, out of twenty-one, devotes ten to what Jesus said and did during this time of the Judean ministry. 4. The resurrection of Christ.

*Differences.*—How accounted for? The scene of Christ's ministry in the synoptics is mostly laid in Galilee, while that of the fourth Gospel is mostly laid in Judea and Jerusalem. There are, however, frequent references in the latter Gospel to Jesus being in Galilee, in its cities and by its lake (1:43; 2:1; 2:12; 4:3; 4:43-46; 6:1; 7:1). This Galilean ministry

seems to have been well known to John. The purpose is evidently, however, to place considerable emphasis, in the matter of the narrative, upon the last week of Christ's ministry upon earth, for out of twenty-one chapters John uses ten in setting forth its events.

In the fourth Gospel we have an account of five visits of Jesus to Jerusalem and the mention, at least, of three celebrations of the passover (2:13; 6:4; 11:55; cf. 5:1); whereas the synoptics mention but one visit to the capital city for the final celebration of the passover. As in the fourth Gospel there are repeated references to the ministry of Jesus in Galilee, so in the synoptics expressions occur, "such as the Saviour's lamentation over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34), which would be unintelligible if this ministry had been confined to Galilee." No one of the Gospels professes to be a complete narrative. "In the gaps in the narratives of Mark, Matthew, and Luke there is plenty of room for all that is peculiar to the fourth Gospel. In the spaces, deliberately left by John between his carefully arranged scenes, there is plenty of room for all that is peculiar to the synoptics. When all have been pieced together there still remain large interstices which it would require many more Gospels to fill" (John 21:25).

The peculiarities of style and thought of the Gospel of John may be accounted for to a large extent by the personal characteristics of the author, the vast difference of the circumstances and time under which he wrote



and those in which the earlier Gospels were made, and the new systems of thought with which Christianity was coming into contact and opposition. "It is generally admitted that the earlier Gospels have reference to distinct types of thought for which they were severally adapted; and there is nothing surprising in the fact that the fourth, and the latest, Gospel was designed to meet the need for a more intellectual and spiritual presentation of divine truth as an antidote to the Gnostic speculations which were imperilling at one time the recognition of the Saviour's Divinity, and at another time that of His humanity."

"A characteristic standpoint of the fourth Gospel is not the yearning for Jesus, the Messiah, to finish His work: 'It is finished' (19: 30). The prophetic and eschatological element in the last supper sounds a still higher note to make it a feast of love and love's duties among Christians. It is the intensity of a present communion with the living Lord, in the Spirit, which dominates the fourth Gospel."

*Material peculiar to the fourth Gospel.*—These additions may be divided into words and works of power of the Christ.

The words. They are of the highest spiritual character. Among them are the conversations of Jesus with Nicodemus about the "New Birth" (John 3); the woman of Samaria (John 4); the Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles and Dedication (John 7 and 8); the discourse concerning the shepherd and the sheep (John 10); the great series of talks and the prayer

upon the occasion of the last supper (John 14 to 17 inclusive).

The works. The six miracles alone recorded by John show a high display of divine power. 1. At Cana of Galilee the very substance of the water is changed (2 : 1-11); 2. A nobleman's son is healed from a distance (4 : 46-54); 3. The cure of a man diseased for thirty-eight years (5 : 1-9); 4. The sight of a man, born blind, is restored (9 : 1-7); 5. The raising of Lazarus (11 : 1-44); 6. The miraculous draught of fishes (21 : 1-6).

Authorship.—An ancient and all but uniform tradition attributed this Gospel to John the beloved apostle. So the ancient Church and its leaders believed and taught. Among those who gave early testimony to John's authorship was Irenæus—115 to 202 A. D.—bishop of Lyons. He had ample opportunity to know about this matter. He lived when a young man in Asia Minor and was a pupil of Polycarp, bishop of the church at Smyrna, who was a disciple of John the apostle, bishop of the near-by church at Ephesus. Irenæus makes many references to all four Gospels. He thus speaks of this fourth Gospel—"Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord who leaned on His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia" (*Adv. Haer.*, III, 1). He tells us further how he often heard Polycarp relate what had been told him by John and other disciples of the Lord. "He appeals to the fourth Gospel as John's with a triumphant certainty." Irenæus is but one of

many testifiers to John's authorship. So important was this Gospel deemed that the opening verses of the first Harmony of the Gospels, made in the second century by Tatian, were taken from its prologue. But the testimony for the authenticity of John is even earlier. So the matter remained undisputed until something over a hundred years ago, when the whole matter was thrown into controversy by a theory which disputed the authorship of John. The theories since that time have been legion: The authorship was attributed to a Platonist of the second century. It was attributed to John, the Elder, who is said to have lived in Ephesus at the close of the first century, or to an unknown Christian leader of Ephesus, well acquainted with the early Gospels, etc. Again it was declared that while the sources might be from John the apostle, the putting together of the Gospel was by another and an unknown hand, who had performed a work for John similar to that which Mark had accomplished for Peter. The theories are too many for mention here in our limited space. The theological character of the Gospel has served to accentuate the controversy, for this Gospel is not favorable to those who reject the divinity of Christ and would make of Him a mere humanitarian figure. One result of this controversy has been to lead scholars of all shades of opinion to examine the external and internal evidences.

This thorough examination of the evidences has brought this Gospel into a deserved prominence. It is coming out quite clearly that this Gospel correctly

represents the condition of things which Christianity had to contend with at the close of the first century, in the city of Ephesus, and that the almost unanimous opinion of scholars, of all shades of opinion, is that the sources of this Gospel, irrespective of authorship, are historical. "That this Gospel is a unity has been and still remains the prevalent opinion of critics of all classes" (Prof. A. S. Peake's "Critical Introduction to the New Testament," p. 226).

It can also be held, with many New Testament scholars, that John the apostle still holds his place as the author, or source, of this Gospel. The evidence, outside the testimony of the early Church, adduced for John's authorship is mainly along five lines :

1. *The writer is shown to be a Jew*, who is thoroughly conversant with the state of things in Palestine and Jerusalem in the time of our Lord. There is a large mass of evidence in this Gospel which proves familiarity with Jewish manners and customs, etc.

2. *The writer is shown to be a Palestinian Jew*.—He knows his Galilee and its cities well. "He also knows his Jerusalem well ; the Pool of Bethesda by the sheep gate with its five porches, the Pool of Siloam, Golgotha, nigh to the city with its garden there, etc." When it is remembered that this Gospel was written many years after the destruction of Jerusalem it is seen that it would not be easy for any one not a native Palestinian to move so freely in the descriptions of a city which had been destroyed.

3. *The writer was an eye-witness*.—This is shown by

the ease with which he moves among the circumstances that he describes, and by the way in which he constantly realizes the situation. He exhibits a remarkable knowledge of the Messianic beliefs current in the Judaism of the times and he describes how these beliefs affected the attitude of the people towards Jesus. . . . "The exact details as to time and place, persons and numbers, point to the recollections of an eye-witness. Special events are associated with definite localities. . . . Points of time are exactly indicated: the sixth hour, the seventh hour, the tenth hour, in the early morning. The length of a period is indicated in several cases: the duration of Christ's stay in Samaria, of His delay before He went to Lazarus, of the interval that elapsed between the death and the raising of the latter. Definite numbers are freely given," etc. The impression is too strong to be shaken off that here is a man who is describing what he sees. One of the most remarkable facts about the writings of recent Jewish critics is their decided tendency to confirm the New Testament pictures of external Jewish life. "Most remarkable of all has been the cumulative strength of the arguments adduced by Jewish writers favorable to the authenticity of the discourses in the fourth Gospel, especially in relation to the circumstances under which they are reported to have been spoken."

4. *The writer was an apostle.*—If he was an eye-witness it is hardly conceivable that he could have been any one but an apostle. There are so many

intimate and personal touches in the narrative that it must have come from the hand of one who was closely associated, for a long time, with Jesus. "Who but an apostle is likely to have been present at so many different scenes, in such various places and at such various times."

5. *The writer was the apostle John.*—"If he was an apostle at all, only John can be thought of. Of the disciples most intimate with Jesus, Peter, James and John, Peter is excluded by the way in which the Gospel speaks of him and James by his early death." The modesty of John is in evidence here, for while he has abundant mention and honor in Mark, Matthew, Luke and Acts he does not mention himself by name in his Gospel, preferring to give honor to others and exploit the cause of his Lord. In the twenty-first chapter of this Gospel, which scholars declare to be an appendix—the Gospel reaching its proper close with 20 : 31—there is a statement of the authorship (21 : 24; cf. 21 : 20) which ascribes it to John, described as the disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast at supper. This appendix has always appeared with this Gospel. "It has been commonly supposed, if not written by the author, that it was added by the Ephesian elders, when the Gospel was first put in circulation."

Twice in this Gospel the writer, who is described as John, the apostle, in 21 : 24; cf. 21 : 20, claims to be an eye-witness: First (1 : 14), "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)



full of grace and truth." The second passage is the testimony of one who stood by the cross when Jesus was crucified—"And he that saw it bare record and his record is true : and he knoweth that he saith true that ye might believe " (19 : 35), but he who stood by the cross was the "Beloved Disciple " (19 : 25-27) to whom Jesus committed the care of His mother.

**John, the Apostle,** was well fitted for his task. He was with John the Baptist, as his disciple, when he proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah. He was among the first disciples of Jesus. He followed his Lord all through His life on earth. He was with Him at His trial and crucifixion. He beheld Him when He rose from the dead. He was very prominent in proclaiming His Gospel from the very first. He had an intimate and first hand knowledge of all that Jesus said and did.

A brief sketch of his life is as follows : John was the son of Zebedee and Salome (Mark 1 : 19-20 ; Matt. 20 : 20). Zebedee was well off, having boats and hired servants ; he is mentioned quite frequently as the father of James and John. Salome, his mother, ministered to Christ of her substance and was present at the crucifixion (Mark 15 : 40 ; Matt. 27 : 56). John early became a disciple of John the Baptist and was one of the first to follow Jesus, after which, for a short time, he seems to have gone back to his old employment, from which he was again called (Mark 1 : 19, 20 ; Matt. 4 : 21, 22) to become a disciple of Jesus. He was one of the chosen group of three, Peter,

James and John, who were nearest to the Christ and admitted to a more intimate companionship than the rest; they were with Christ at the time of His greatest glory in the Transfiguration (Matt. 17: 1-13) and at the time of His deep sorrow in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14: 33). He followed his Master to the cross and was there to receive His last words, when He gave His mother into his charge (John 19: 26, 27). John was with the apostles who met Jesus after the resurrection. He did a great work in proclaiming the new religion which is recorded in Acts (chapters 3, 4, and 8: 14-25).

According to a well supported tradition, for which we have the authority of Irenæus and Papias and the Muratorian Fragment, as well as Polycrates of Ephesus and Clement of Alexandria—all of the second century—John the apostle settled in the great city of Ephesus late in the sixties. Here also Andrew and Philip are said to have resided in their later years. Here John, in virtue of his position as an apostle, acted as a bishop or superintendent of the church in Ephesus and the churches in the neighboring cities. The church in Ephesus was founded by Paul (Acts 19) and later was infected with those errors which Paul had warned it against (Acts 20: 29, 30) and which to correct, and set forth the truth, John in all probability wrote his Gospel. John lived until about the close of the first century, according to tradition.

**Date and Place of Writing.**—About 90 A. D. and at Ephesus in Asia Minor.

## QUESTIONS

Give the object in writing this Gospel. How had Christianity to disentangle itself from speculations of Greek philosophy as it had from Jewish legalism? Give the situation in which Christianity found itself. What was the clear vision of John? What doctrine did he set forth as central to the Christian faith? What can be said of the subject matter? What does the prologue contend for? What can be said about the selection and arrangement of material? Into how many parts is this Gospel divided and what is the significance of this division? What is the double purpose of this Gospel? What is the relation of the fourth Gospel to the other three—the points of agreement—the differences and how accounted for—material peculiar to this Gospel? What can be said of the authorship? What is the evidence adduced for John's authorship—the five lines? What can be said of the life of John and his fitness to write this Gospel? Date and time of writing?

## STUDY IX

### THE REVELATION OF THE CHRIST

**The Vital Questions of the Christian Faith.**—The fourth Gospel saw the light in a time of intense intellectuality. The Christian faith was subjected to keen criticism. It was called upon not only to defend itself against its detractors, but also to clearly and plainly define itself in relation to the philosophical, religious and social notions of its times. It was not sufficient to simply set forth the historical facts of the earthly career of its Lord. There was need more now than ever before, since Christianity was claiming to be "The Universal Religion," to show how those facts were related to man's universal desire to know God and to enter into right relations with Him. Irrespective of the age in which he lived, the race to which he belonged, the circumstances which claimed him, man has ever asked the questions, "Who is God?" "How is man related to Him?" "What is the universe and who made it?" "Is man to live after death?" and a score of others. Upon the answers given are built up the religious, philosophical and social systems of mankind. Christ gave new answers to the old world-

wide questions. If these answers were accepted the old systems must go. But the acceptance of these answers was vital to the Christian faith. Here was the issue.

In this Gospel it was, and is, believed that there was, and is, a larger revelation of and by the Christ than in any other New Testament writing. That there is here a new and divine revelation of God to man needs to be taken into account if the message is to be understood.

It is a significant fact that it is in the revelation in this Gospel that we have the fullest, clearest and ablest answers to the world-wide questions of God, life and destiny that have ever been given. Ever since they were given they have been replacing the old answers and the new systems of thought are being built upon them. Some of the questions answered are :

*Who is Jesus Christ?*—How is He related to God? How is He related to the universe? How is He related to man and what can He and what does He do for him? These were live questions in Ephesus and they are alive to-day. They have not lost one bit of their interest. Men wanted then, as they do now, direct and positive answers. In the first eighteen verses of the first chapter of this Gospel we have a statement of facts about the Christ. There is here no evasion of the issue. Christ was in the beginning. He was with God. He was God. All things were made by Him. In Him was life : and the life was the

light of men. . . . He became flesh and dwelt among us. . . . No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. These things were claimed for Him by the writer of this Gospel, but afterwards He claimed them for Himself. There was a divinity and authority in His words. He healed the sick. He forgave sins. He raised the dead. But above all He desired to help and to save men. The universal desire for an earthly manifestation of God is here satisfied: The Word, which was God, was made known in the flesh (John 1 : 1, 14).

*How can a man know God?*—How can he come into actual and intimate relations with Him? The answer, given in the third chapter, in Christ's talk with Nicodemus, Christianity has ever since adopted as its own. Religion is not simply a matter of form and ceremony; it is a thing of new heart; a new life. It is a casting aside of the old and having done with it. But it is exceedingly difficult for a man to make this change for himself; hence divine spiritual help is to be given him by the Christ: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

*Where and how shall a man worship God?*—What is the true worship of God? Who is God? Who is the Messiah? These again are universal questions. Nothing can equal the simplicity, the beauty and sublimity of the answers which Christ gives to these diffi-



cult questions in His conversation with the woman of Samaria, recorded in the fourth chapter. The true worshipper is taught that it does not need a particular place or a special time to worship ; he can come into communion with God, in spirit, at any time or at any place. Then follows that wonderful definition of God—"For God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." This answer of the Christ sounded the death-knell of idolatry—so prevalent in Ephesus and the other cities of the ancient world—and spelled the ruin of the idol temples. It set men free for a spiritual worship of God (4: 19-26). Who is the Messiah? "When He is come," the woman of Samaria asserts, "He will tell us all things," to which "Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He." He is the interpreter of the old and the herald of the new ; He is the "Light and Life of the world."

*Does God really care for man?*—There is a loneliness in a man's soul that hungers for the comfort of God. He is the citizen of a great universe which, with all his striving, he fails to understand. Is the great power at the heart of the universe both loving and kind? This question is answered in John 3: 16-21 and in Christ's discourse on the "Shepherd and the Sheep" (10: 1-18). There can be no more positive teaching of the love and kindness and care of God for man. See also John 15: 1-13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

*Is man personally immortal?*—Man has ever been striving to peer into the future. This has been one of the most debated of all questions because it is of universal interest. The eleventh chapter is taken to answer this question, where we are told how Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. He desired to make sure to His disciples His lordship over the realm of the other world in that He could call back a man who had been four days dead. He declares: "I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (11 : 25, 26).

These, with other questions (see the analysis which follows) which are answered—in the discourses and conversations of Christ—in John's Gospel are vital to our Christian faith. Let a man get right upon these great things and all the minor ones will adjust themselves.

## ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

After the prologue this Gospel falls naturally into three unequal parts.

### THE PROLOGUE

(1 : 1-18)

*The subject is Jesus Christ* who is here presented as the Preëxistent, Eternal, Divine Word, manifested in the incarnation, heralded by John and commended to the faith of every man.

## I. THE REVELATION OF CHRIST TO THE WORLD

(1 : 19-12 : 50)

The time, in this section, embraces about three years, and three passovers are recorded. The work of Jesus was mainly in Judea, but several journeys to Galilee and its cities are mentioned. He reveals Himself to the world as the Eternal Word.

1. *Christ is proclaimed as the true Word of God* (1 : 19-2 : 12).—(a) By the testimony of John the Baptist who designates Him as "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and declares that "He is the Son of God" (1 : 19-34). (b) By the testimony of the disciples who declared, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (1 : 35-51). (c) By the sign of a miracle, in Cana of Galilee, in which the substance of the water is changed (2 : 1-11). From Cana Christ went to Capernaum (2 : 12).

2. *Christ is recognized by His work and words* (2 : 13-4 : 54).—Jesus goes to Jerusalem at the time of the passover (2 : 13). (a) As Master of the Temple, which He cleanses (2 : 13-25). (b) In the conversation with Nicodemus on the "New Birth" where He shows what a man must do—and what can be done for him—to enter into the Kingdom of God (3 : 1-21). (c) By the renewed testimony of John the Baptist to the supreme character of the revelation in Him (3 : 22-36). (d) In the conversation with the woman of Samaria—on the way from Judea to Galilee—in which

He declares Himself to be the Messiah, so long expected by the Jews (4 : 1-42). (e) In the miracle of the healing of the nobleman's son in Capernaum. This great work of mercy, it should be noted, was performed, at a distance, by Christ from Cana of Galilee (4 : 43-54).

3. *Christ reveals Himself more and more fully.*—He declares His mission and His principles (5 : 1-12 : 50). His relations to God and man are clearly defined. These chapters show the conflict of the "Light of the World" with spiritual darkness. "Many believe on Him and the faith of His disciples is strengthened, but the leaders of the nation reject Him and resolve upon His death."

(a) He defines His relation to God, the Father (5 : 1-47). The occasion of the discourse, given here, is the healing, in Jerusalem, of a man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years. He declares in this discourse that "All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him" (5 : 23).

(b) He declares His relation to men and what He can do for them (6 : 1-71). The occasion for this discourse, which is on "The Bread of Life," is the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and the attendant events. Jesus had gone up into Galilee and over the Sea of Galilee, where this miracle had been performed. In returning, at night, over the Sea of Galilee there was a storm in which Jesus, who had not gone in the

boat with His disciples, had come to them walking on the water. Arriving in Capernaum He entered into the synagogue and talked to the assembled people upon His relation to men. Referring to Himself, He said, "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." . . . "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." . . . "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Such open and plain statements, of the greatness and divine character of His mission for men, angered the Jews. Many of His disciples left Him but the Twelve believed in Him more firmly.

(c) He makes known His relation to the world, as "The Light of the World," in the discussion which arises over the questions: "Who He is," "Whence He is" and "Whither He goes" (chapters 7 and 8). The events and discussion reported in these chapters took place at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. It is in the seventh chapter that the debate, as to who and what He is, is very animated. The Pharisees become more embittered and they, with the chief priests, send officers to apprehend Him; in this they fail. There is a division of the people because of Him. In the eighth chapter Jesus again goes over His claims, taking for His text the words, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in dark-

ness but shall have the light of life" (8:12). There is no ambiguity in Jesus' statements and claims in this chapter.

(d) He claims to be the Divine One. He accepts worship (9:38) and declares that men are saved through Him (10:9). These claims are once more set forth in the discussions which take place in chapters 9 and 10. In chapter 9 He heals a blind man after which the Jews try to persuade the blind man that the one who had healed him was not a man of God. In this they do not succeed. They cast him out of the synagogue. Jesus finding the blind man, after he had been cast out by the Jews, asks him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" "And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him and it is He which talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him" (9:35-38). In chapter 10 Jesus shows His love and care for men in the parable of the "Good Shepherd." Here He declares His mission and that He is the means of salvation: "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved." At the Feast of Dedication (10:22-42) Jesus in answer to the direct question of the Jews tells them that He is the Christ and declares: "I and My Father are one." The Jews again seek to apprehend Him but He escapes them.

(e) He proves Himself to be the Lord of life and death in the raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:1-



57). In doing this He said: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (11: 25, 26).

(f) He publicly sets forth His Messiahship in riding in triumph from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem (12: 12-19). Chapter twelve is taken up with the anointing of Jesus, the consultation by the chief priests of how they might put Lazarus to death with Jesus, the triumphal entry, the coming of the Gentiles to see Jesus, Jesus' announcement of His death and its results and His rejection by the Jews.

## 2. THE INNER REVELATION OF CHRIST TO HIS DISCIPLES

(13: 1-17: 26)

The discourses reported in these five chapters, 13 to 17, occupy but a single evening and were spoken by Christ in the room in Jerusalem, where the Last Supper was observed and on the way to the garden of Gethsemane. He is fully aware that His arrest by the Jews is only a matter of a very short time and that, after that, there will follow at once for Him cruel torture and an ignominious death. He knows that His friends and disciples for a while will turn away from Him. Yet in the face of all this, and it is well to remember this, He goes calmly and confidently forward, speaking of the great things which pertain to His Kingdom in this life and the life to come. He

here enters into the closest and most loving fellowship with His disciples. He entreats His disciples not to let their "heart be troubled." He tells them of the solace of the Holy Spirit who will come to them and teach them, and, at the last, He prays for them.

1. *Jesus gives His disciples a lesson of humility and love after the last supper (13 : 1-38).*—He washes the disciples' feet and gives a new commandment, "That ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Lofty teaching indeed, for He is now betrayed into the hands of His enemies.

2. *Jesus seeks to comfort His disciples (14 : 1-31).*—He teaches that nothing can go amiss, here or hereafter, to those who love and are in harmony with God.

3. *Jesus exhorts to an abiding faith in and a union with Himself,* under the figure of the vine and its branches (15 : 1-27). This is the way of life.

4. *Jesus promises the guidance and care of the Holy Spirit.*—He knows the weakness of men and that they need the spiritual power that can be obtained through Him (16 : 1-33).

5. *Jesus prays for and commends His disciples to the care of God (17 : 1-26).*—He knows that it is only as they are kept closely in communion with the Divine Influence that they will be able to withstand the great pressure that will be brought to bear upon them to abandon their faith ; but if they are in the keeping power of God that nothing can harm them. He earnestly prays for the keeping of His disciples for their work.

### 3. THE HUMILIATION AND GLORIFICATION OF THE CHRIST

(18: 1-21: 25)

1. *The humiliation* (18: 1-19: 42).—Christ, in His death, becomes the source of life as He declared beforehand (12: 23, 24 and 17: 21): "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." Yet that hour was an exceedingly painful one. It was one which required the utmost fortitude and courage, even if it was expected and planned for. That suffering was more than physical; it was a bitter trial of the soul and an utmost agony of the spirit. We may never understand the heaviness of that burden which He carried, to its awful ending in the cross, for mankind. We have in chapters 18 and 19 the culmination and apparent triumph of hostile unbelief. The events follow in quick succession. Jesus is arrested (18: 1-14). He has a trial before the Jewish authorities. Peter denies that he knows Him (18: 15-27). He is tried by Pilate, to whom He declares, upon questioning, His mission and kingship. Pilate endeavors to save Him but the Jews reject his efforts. They demand His crucifixion, "Because He made Himself the Son of God." Upon this charge He is led out to be crucified (18: 28-19: 16). He is crucified with this inscription over His head, upon the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews" (19: 17-30). His burial (19: 31-42).

2. *The glorification of the Christ* (20: 1-21-25).—The triumph of evil was short lived. When it seemed

to have everything its own way, and there seemed to be nothing which could check it, forces were already in operation which would turn its triumph into a rout. The resurrection of Christ stands unique in the history of the world. The Christ whose cause seemed to be wholly and totally lost at His death was now hailed with an enthusiasm which knew no bounds and that enthusiasm, over a risen and glorified Lord, has continued to increase, for He is "The Light of the World," and the One through whom we hope for our salvation. We have in chapters 20 and 21 the restoration and confirmation of our faith. The events are: The finding of the empty tomb (20: 1-10). The appearance of Jesus to Mary (20: 11-18). The appearance to the disciples, Thomas being absent (20: 19-25). The appearance to Thomas with the other disciples. Jesus, as Thomas had doubted, bids him test Him. Thomas, satisfied by his test, exclaims, "My Lord and my God" (20: 26-31). The appearance of Jesus to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee and His talk with Peter in regard to his work (21: 1-25).

### QUESTIONS

How are "The Vital Questions of the Christian Faith" related to the universal ones of God, life and destiny? What is the significant fact about the revelation in this Gospel? Give the five questions mentioned here and tell what they mean. Into how many unequal parts, after the prologue, is this Gospel divided? What is the subject of this Gospel set forth in the prologue? In the first section—

“The Revelation of Christ to the World”—what is the time embraced and the number of passovers mentioned? Where did Jesus do His work? How is Christ proclaimed as the true Word of God? How is He recognized by His work and words? How does He reveal Himself—His relation to God, the Father—His relation to men—His relation to the world—His claims to be the Divine One and the Messiah? In the second section—“The Inner Revelation of Christ to His Disciples”—how long did the events and discourses reported here last? How did Jesus appear in the face of certain death? Give the five points made—with the prayer—of instruction by Christ. What can be said of the humiliation and the glorification of the Christ?





# BIBLE STUDY BY BOOKS

BY

HENRY T. SELL, D.D.

---

New Edition, Revised, with Introductory Chapter on The Making of the Bible.

---

## 52 CHAPTERS, EMBRACING THE 66 BOOKS IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

*An abridged Analysis of the first five Chapters is here given*

1. **GENESIS: The Book of Beginnings.** Origin of the World, Man, Sin, Salvation. Revelations of God as Creator, Preserver, Lawgiver, Judge and Merciful Sovereign. Principal Persons, Leading Events, Purpose, Plan, Religious and Scientific Value. Analysis: The Ten Divisions.
2. **EXODUS: The Making of a Nation.** Contents, Purpose-Scope, the Two Great Divisions, Narrative and Legislative, the Moral, Ceremonial and Civil Laws, Historical Value. Analysis: The Nation, I. Called, II. Constituted, III. Consecrated.
3. **LEVITICUS: The Government of the Nation.** Connection of Leviticus with Exodus, Contents, Purpose, The Law of Sacrifices, The Form and Significance. Analysis: I. Fundamental Laws of Sacrifice, Purification and Atonement; II. The Law of Holiness; III. The Commutation of Vows and Tithes.
4. **NUMBERS: The Training of the Nation.** Contents, Relation to Leviticus, Object and Accomplishment of the object in the Training of the Nation, Advantages of the Desert Wandering, Manner of the Desert Life. Analysis: I. The Preparation at Sinai; II. The March. Sinai and Moab; III. The Victory, the Plain of Moab.
5. **DEUTERONOMY: The Review Book.** Situation of the Tribes, Review of the Law and History of Israel, Necessity for this Review, Contents, Purpose. Analysis: The Three Addresses of Moses, I. Remembrance of God's Care; II. Exposition of the Law; III. Renewal of the Covenant.

---

**This Series of Studies** "Aims to set forth clearly the purpose, contents and analysis of each book and to show its relative place among the other books, especially its share in revealing divine truth."

"It presents one of the best possible plans of Bible study, that of analysis and mastery of a book as a whole."  
This book has been translated into the Spanish language

---

273 Pages, 12mo

# **BIBLE STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

BY

**HENRY T. SELL, D.D.**

---

## **EIGHT CHAPTERS**

**Covering the Eight Periods of Christ's Ministry**

- 1. The Early Years of Jesus.**
  - 2. The Immediate Preparation.**
  - 3. Public Ministry—First Year.**
  - 4. Public Ministry—Second Year.**
  - 5. Public Ministry—Third Year.**
  - 6. Public Ministry—Last Four Months.**
  - 7. Passion Week.**
  - 8. The Resurrection.**
- 

This book is practical, historical and constructive and specially suited for class work. There is something more than a bare outline. The setting and background of the discourses, parables and miracles is given. Places are graphically described. The course of events, so far as known, from the beginning of Christ's life to the close is marked out. The great divisions of the ministry are noted. All is done in a brief, concise and interesting way.

---

**160 Pages, 12mo.**



1 1012 01208 0729

[illegible]



